

**ARTS INTERVENTIONS AND THE DESISTANCE PROCESS:
AGENCY THROUGH ART AMONG FEMALE OFFENDERS DURING
INCARCERATION AND UPON RELEASE**



SOPHIE NICKEAS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of The University of West London for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

January 2018

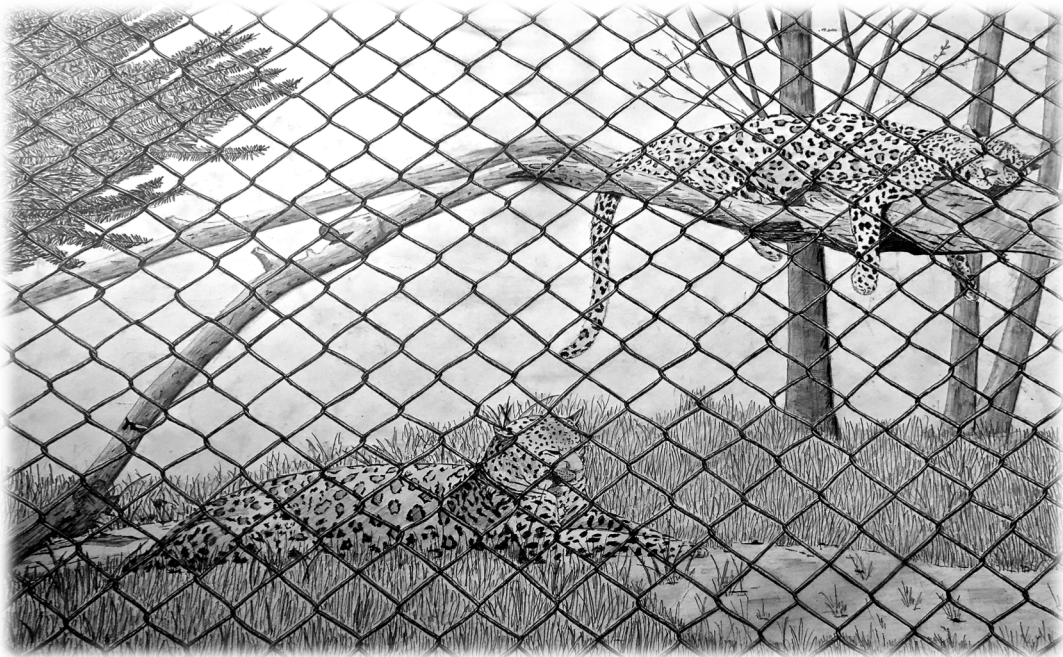


Abstract

Arts Interventions and the Desistance Process: Agency Through Art Among Female Offenders During Incarceration and Upon Release

This research focuses on a small group of female offenders in England and the ways in which engagement in the arts during incarceration can support and accelerate the desistance process. In the most recent review of the female prison estate, Robinson (2013) suggests that 'life' and 'independence' skills should be acquired in prison in preparation for release. Communication and social skills form the basis of many of the mainstream intervention programs within the Criminal Justice System (Caulfield & Wilkinson 2017:20). Expansion of independence skills would support the other skills that women learn in prison and offer a very practical response to the difficulties that they describe in their lives in the community (Robinson 2013). This research explores whether access to the arts within prison can form the basis of fostering such skills in order to motivate and engage learners. The transition from 'offender' to 'ex-offender' is considered, as are the ways in which agency acquired through the arts can be applied throughout the continuing stages of rehabilitation. By following a woman's journey upon release and her integration back into the community the study determines whether the arts can sustain to the final stage of the desistance process, when someone creates a replacement self. The case studies of six women serving sentences at the same prison between 2012 and 2014 form the basis of this research, with their stories and experiences being told through their artwork and interviews. A criminological model of desistance developed by Giordano et al. (2002) contextualised alongside Margaret Archer's (2003) theory of identity formation is critically evaluated. Links and comparison between evolving reflexive identities and transitional stages of desistance are presented in order to answer the research questions. In doing so, it is determined as to whether identity subgroups bear resemblance to specific stages in the desistance process. Critical analysis considers whether an individual can develop or re-establish an identity as a result of the creative activities they engage in during incarceration.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father Denis McCarthy



Acknowledgements

There are many people that I need to thank for supporting me throughout the undertaking of this project. First and foremost my principal supervisor Dr Jannie Roed, for believing in this project and my secondary supervisors Prof Joelle Fanghanel and Tony Olden for their support throughout. A big thank you goes to my former manager Shaun Reynolds for letting me take days off work to write and collect data and keeping me on track with regular pep talks. The support my family have given me has been greatly appreciated over the past four years. In particular, my mum Sallyann McCarthy for proof reading and helping me out financially and my brother Glynn McCarthy for creating the perfect illustration. My former colleague Peter Blake produced the most creative images and diagrams for me for which I am eternally grateful. Without the permission and flexibility from the staff at HMP Sale this research would not have been possible. I want to say a massive thank you to both the current and previous Governor, Head of Learning and Skills and Head of Prisoner Care for their support in obtaining the information and access to the prison and participants that I required. I have the greatest respect and admiration for the six women in the study, without whom the project would not have been possible. Thank you for agreeing to be part of this and making it such a special enquiry.

Finally, I must thank my husband Paul Nickeas and daughter Edie Nickeas who had to eat, sleep and breathe this project with me and their continued support kept me going throughout, they continue to be my inspiration. Thank you for turning the music down when I asked.

Order of Thesis

This thesis comprises of six chapters. The introduction chapter introduces the nature, background and scope of the research project, including the research questions and original contribution to knowledge. Chapter two presents a comprehensive literature review of broad themes around: women's imprisonment, models of desistance theory, identity formation, offender learning and arts within the Criminal Justice System. Chapter three sets out the theoretical framework for the thesis and provides critical analysis and explanation of and justification for the use of a model of social identity theory and a model of desistance. This underpinning ideology provides clarity as to how and why a method of thematic trend analysis has been applied when interpreting data collected through interview and the consideration for artefacts made by participants. Within this chapter the reader is introduced to the participant group in the chapter's method section.

The findings from data collection are presented over the next two chapters. Firstly in the form of case studies detailing each participant's involvement with the arts in prison and presented are a number of artworks produced during incarceration with analysis and interpretation. A themes chapter follows, concentrating on two facets of the data collection: how the responses to interview questions correspond to the research question and support the theoretical framework and how the artwork articulates personal narrative and self-expression. Finally, Chapter six concludes the study through discussion, argument and synthesis drawing together the data and core findings as well as limitations of the study. New ideology concerning theoretical models of interpretation and intervention relating to desistance and identity formation are presented as part of the conclusion. Also included as part of this chapter are the opportunities for further investigation, alongwith critical reflection of the project's scope, validity and ability to address the research questions.

Artwork produced by the participants of this research features consistently throughout the thesis and have formed an integral part of the project. All of the illustrations and paintings that routinely appear throughout the thesis, before and beyond Chapter four (unless specified), have been created by participant Bettie over a thirty-year period. This includes the title page.

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List of abbreviations

HMP	Her Majesty's Prison UK establishment housing sentenced and remand female or male prisoners.
YJB	Youth Justice Board Government body that regulates the management, rehabilitation and resettlement of juvenile offenders in England and Wales
CJS	Criminal Justice System System of practices and institutions of governments directed at upholding social control, deterring and mitigating crime, or sanctioning those who violate laws with criminal penalties and rehabilitation efforts.
ROTL	Released on temporary licence Mechanism by which offenders may undertake activities in the community that are necessary and/or which cannot be facilitated within prison.
CPT	European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
GOAD	Good Order and Discipline A board of prison professionals that monitor and determine the categorisation and provision of serving prisoners displaying poor behaviour and non-compliance in the prison regime.
RS	Restricted Status Prisoner Any female, young person or young adult prisoner, convicted or on remand, whose escape would present a serious risk to the public and who is required to be held in designated secure accommodation.
NOMS	National Offender Management Service Government agency that manages the housing, movement and administration of all prisoners and detainees in the UK. Also ensuring that sure people serve the sentences and orders handed out by courts, both in prisons and in the community.
YOI	Young Offenders' Institute Secure units for juvenile prisoners aged 15 to 18 years (male) or young persons aged 18 to 21 (male and female).
YO	Young Offender A male offender aged from 15 to 18, in women's prison this can typically be an offender aged between 18 and 21.

MOJ	Ministry of Justice A ministerial department of the UK Government headed by the Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor. Responsible for areas of constitutional policy, human rights law and information rights law across the UK.
SIR	Significant Information Report Paper based reporting system for reporting information or intelligent gathered within a custodial setting that may pose a security risk anonymously or otherwise.
IPP	Imprisonment for Public Protection Those sentenced to life imprisonment or an indeterminate sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection.
OLASS	Offender Learning and Skills Service Service delivered by the Skills Funding Agency to provide education and training in prison to prisoners.
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
SFA	Skills Funding Agency Body that provides funding to education providers in prison.

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Chapter 1: Introduction



Area of research

The nature and scope of this study sits firmly in the research areas of arts education and offender learning with the intention of establishing the impact of arts based programmes upon the lives of participants following their release from prison. This work will contribute to knowledge concerning the impact of the arts within prison by looking beyond the classroom. In their recent report the European Committee for

the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) (2017) found there to be fundamental deficiencies in the provision, attendance rates and quality of education in adult English prisons and the need for wide-scale change. They also considered the response from policy makers and prisons themselves to be slow and lacking when responding to research and recommendations for change.

The prison sector is lacking in evidence-based knowledge that actually quantifies the aspects of an individual's life that may have been enhanced or improved through their engagement in the arts whilst in prison. There are also gaps in the literature concerning female engagement in prison arts and issues around the promotion of wider participation amongst this underrepresented and marginalised group within the criminal justice system.

Our vision is to promote access to arts and creative opportunities as a springboard to positive change for all those who come into contact with the Criminal Justice System. We provide a network to promote, develop and support high quality arts practice in criminal justice settings, influencing and informing government, commissioners and the public.

(National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance 2017)

Although involvement in the arts is sometimes presented within the criminal justice context simply as a way for prisoners to pass the time, the reality is that the artistic process is often a challenging one, and one that requires dedication, patience and the learning of new skills (National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance 2010). The arts have a long tradition within the criminal justice system, engagement in prisons is high and for many it is a re-introduction to education (Clements 2004). However, the notion that the public has not always perceived engagement in the arts to be representative of sufficient punishment (Hopwood 2010) may have an influence on the way the arts are delivered.

As an art teacher with extensive experience of arts practice and education management within prisons, I am conscious that the curriculum offer must reflect the personal development needs of the service user (i.e. the prisoner). In addition, there is the need to evidence the social and economic viability of prison arts provision upon the wider community with re-offending costing the government an estimated £9.5bn to £13bn a year (Johnson et al. 2008).

Similarly, Bilby et al. (2013) suggest that engagement in the arts in prison has an impact on how individuals view themselves and therefore on how they view their future potential. This willingness to take risks can be associated with a participant's move towards being open to the possibility of changing their behaviour, outlook and life. It is my belief that arts provision should remain a vital component of the current education offer within custodial settings for its personal and social development benefits to the individual. This notion is supported by Johnson et al. (2011) who states that using arts-based activities can contribute to the reduction of offending, improve literacy and numeracy skills and get more young people back into mainstream education, employment and training.

This research will address and answer the following key research questions:

1. How can/do the arts within prison promote and support agency amongst groups of women in prison?

Prompting the following questions to be asked of research participants:

- How did art support them through day-to-day prison life?
- How has it prepared them for release in terms of progressing into further study or employment?

2. What role does art play in identity formation with groups of female ex-offenders?
 - How have they applied any learnt skills/disciplines within their work and/or personal life outside of prison?

Contribution to knowledge

Much current research concerning the impact of engagement in prison arts education upon the recipient relies heavily on the anecdotal evidence of participants, programme reviewers, researchers and facilitators during or shortly after the event within the confinement of the prison itself. Researchers often talk about engagement in the arts being associated with 'primary desistance' and claim that both prisoners and ex-offenders can respond in a positive and 'hopeful' manner with a view to taking responsibility for one's actions (See Bilby et al. 2013; Cheliotis 2014; Gussak 2009). Cheliotis (2014) argues that art-based programmes can contribute to psychological and physical wellbeing whilst in custody, enhancing self-esteem, a greater sense of achievement, empowerment and higher levels of self-efficacy. In the most recent review of the education provision for the prison population in England and Wales Coates (2016) echoes this sentiment and encourages prisons to include greater provision of high quality creative arts provision to improve self-knowledge, develop self-confidence and therefore help tackle reoffending (2).

The focus of my own research is to establish the impact of such art projects and programmes upon the lives of participants after sustained periods following their release, allowing them time to reflect on their experiences and integrate back into

society. Whilst this research acknowledges issues around the therapeutic aspects and benefits of prison arts, I recognise the need to differentiate between art as 'education' and art as 'therapy' and that studies of the latter encompass rigorous psychological exploration. Within the context of this study it is made very clear that data collection and findings will reflect the undertaking of arts based educational (and to some extent recreational) programmes as opposed to psychological interventions or treatments.

Given the setting for this research, the juxtaposition between arts education theory and criminological theory are intrinsically entwined as both subscribe to philosophies concerning rehabilitation and the management of female offenders. The methodology applies a broad criminological model of desistance theory (Giordano et al's Theory of Transformation Reformation 2002) contextualised alongside Margaret Archer's theory regarding identity formation (Archer 2003, 2007, 2012), establishing the positioning of art as a catalyst between the two dichotomies. As a result new thought and proposition generated by this research contributes to existing knowledge concerning desistance, identity theory and connectivity with arts practice as discussed from chapter four onward.

Essentially, and most importantly, this research gives a voice to an otherwise marginalised group of women effected by the criminal justice system, whether they are currently imprisoned or trying to rebuild their life back in the community.

Background

Art provision is included as part of the curriculum in some form or another at all 12 of the female prisons in England and Wales and is often used as a therapeutic and recreational outlet as well as a vocational and accredited option. The role and position of the arts within prison has long been the topic of much research and discussion, with varying opinions on its relevance and outcomes in terms of rehabilitation. The Community Arts Movement has argued the social benefits of art for the individual and the community since the 1960s (Sivapalan 2015). However, although there is a significant body of evidence to support this argument, most of it is anecdotal and there were significant gaps in the documentation of work. The low priority accorded to the issue of impact measurement within the political and policy agendas, coupled with the lack of a systematic evidence-base, have meant that the case for the arts having a wider societal impact has never been sufficiently robust to convince policymakers to release substantive funds for its further investigation (Reeves 2002).

With high re-offending rates, a steadily increasing prison population and pressure from commissioners and policy makers, there is a need to justify and evidence the impact of arts interventions within prison in relation to rehabilitation and desistance from crime. At the end of July 2017, with a capacity of 87,053, 86,081 people were imprisoned in the UK, 3,961 of them were woman (Prison Population Figures 2017 www.gov.uk). The UK prison population briefing paper published in early 2017 documents the sharp increase in the numbers of prisoners incarcerated across England and Wales since 1900. The average daily prison population increased from just under 2,700 in 1900 to just under 7,700 in 2015/16 (a three-fold increase). As in England and Wales, from the mid-1940s the prison population increased

steadily until the 1970s where it remained relatively stable. Since 1990 the prison population again increased by 62%, reaching a peak of 8,179 in 2011/12 (Allen & Watson 2017:35). Between 2004/05 and 2013/14 the average daily prison population increased by 17%. The number of male prisoners increased by around 16% and female prisoners by 30% (Allen & Watson 2017:20).

It is not surprising then that the Howard League for penal Reform report that prisons are extremely overcrowded. Under the Ministry of Justice's own definition of safety and decency, the prison estate should not hold more than 76,026 people. There are currently 10,204 men and women held above this level. Overcrowding is not evenly distributed across the prison estate, so some prisons hold many more people than they are designed to do so safely (www.howardleague.org 2017).

According to the charity Women in Prison (2016), the female prison population increased by 115% between 1995 and 2010. Most of the rise in the female prison population can be explained by a significant increase in the severity of sentences. Between 2009-2013 the number of women sentenced for theft from a shop decreased by 4% whilst the number sentenced to custody increased by 17% (Women in Prison 2016). This is largely attributed to the notion that many women are jailed for less serious crimes, often owing to repeat offending and breaching terms of early release:

Too many women are still serving short prison sentences; often for breach of community orders imposed for offences which would not have normally attracted a custodial sentence.

(HM Chief Inspector of prisons 2014:11)

Almost half of women leaving prison are reconvicted within one year – for those serving sentences of less than 12 months this increases to 62%

(www.womeninprison.org.uk 2016).

In July 2014 to June 2015 around 471,000 adult and juvenile offenders were cautioned, received a non-custodial conviction at court or released from custody. Around 118,000 of these offenders committed a proven re-offence within a year. This gives an overall proven reoffending rate of 25.0%.

(Ministry of Justice re-offending statistics 2017:3)

For the year 2013 the charity Women in Prison reported that the reoffending rate rose to 75% for women who had served more than 11 previous custodial sentences.

Political stance

Many Government reports have defended the notion that employment is the answer to the issue of reducing re-offending (see: Support for Ex-Offenders 2016; Coates 2016; Transforming Rehabilitation 2013; Providing Employment and Training Opportunities for Offenders 2014; Reducing Reoffending in Young Adults: What Works 2015). The Coates Review (2016) (commissioned by the MoJ to review education in the adult prison estate) followed by the Taylor Review (2016) (commissioned by the YJB to review the juvenile prison estate). Both reviews concluded that education and training were *'the building blocks on which a life free from crime can be constructed'* (Taylor 2016:4) and through education *'prisoners can be helped to raise their aspiration, turn their lives around, avoid reoffending, and make our communities safer'* (Coates 2016:61).

In an earlier review in 2005 of education and training provision the Department of Education and Skills concluded that offenders and ex-offenders tend to have skills levels well below those of the general population, and are much more likely to be unemployed. Therefore, sustained employment was the key to leading a crime-free life (Reducing Re-Offending through Skills and Employment, Department of Education and Skills 2005:14).

In more recent reports the findings are similar and the skills gap continues to widen. Research studies as well as anecdotal evidence demonstrate the positive impact that employment can have on reducing the risk of re-offending (Home Office, Clinks and Social Firms UK 2014:4). Whilst being employed has been shown to be associated with reduced reoffending, Bisset et al. (2015) suggest that just having any job does will not encourage desistance; instead stability and quality of the job are required to support the process.

Whilst there may be evidence to support this seemingly logical yet simplistic approach, it does not take into account issues of importance such as gender and unique circumstance for the individual. It certainly does not differentiate between groups of prisoners and more pertinently, males and females. Overall, female offenders are a vastly different group with different needs and problems to their male counterparts.

In 2005 the Labour Government brought out a green paper putting greater emphasis on progressing ex-offenders into work, proposing a number of initiatives including: connecting offenders to employers, jobcentres and providing appropriate vocational training in a bid to tackle high rates of re-offending. In 2012 the coalition Government announced that they were also focusing on employment in order to

drive down re-offending with the Prime Minister calling on companies, charities and organisations to help them rehabilitate prisoners through education and the acquisition of new skills. (Hughes 2012).

Even though incentives and initiatives for employment opportunities for ex-offenders have been a firm focus of Government in recent years, (as highlighted in the 2015 policy paper: *2010 to 2015 Government Policy: Reoffending and rehabilitation which put emphasis on payment by results as a means of reducing*) re-offending and high reconviction rates remains an issue and area of concern:

Around half of all crime is committed by people who have already been through the criminal justice system. The cost to the taxpayer of reoffending is estimated to be £9.5 to £13 billion per year. Reoffending has been too high for too long, despite significant government spending on offender management in the last decade. There has been little change in reconviction rates and almost half of those released from prison go on to reoffend within 12 months.

(2010 to 2015 Government Policy: Reoffending and rehabilitation, Home Office & Ministry of Justice 2015, www.gov.uk)

There is the issue and argument though that rehabilitation of the individual extends far beyond the limitations of simply 'finding a job'. It encompasses the mind and how a person sees oneself, others, and the world around them. The prospect of employment may be a distant one but within reach once many other steps have been taken to change a person's perspective on their situation (Nickeas 2013).

In the most recent review of the female custodial estate Robinson (2013) suggests that 'life' and 'independence' skills should be acquired in prison for preparation for release. Expansion of independence skills would support the other skills that women learn in prison and offer a very practical response to the difficulties that they describe in their lives in the community (Robinson 2013). These 'life' skills can be

embedded through participation and engagement in the arts. One of Robinson's key recommendations was for all women's prisons to facilitate classroom support assistant roles to promote self-sufficiency and independence amongst groups of women.

In their project when working with older prisoners engaging in arts interventions Caulfield and Wilkinson (2017) reported that a number of male prisoners/participants commented that it was important to have something to do with their time. Particularly given the repetitiveness of routine inside the prison. They expressed that having something different to do was important and some of the men had considered how they could follow up their participation in this particular project with further projects (Caulfield and Wilkinson 2017:21). Although involvement in the arts is sometimes presented within the criminal justice context simply as a way for prisoners to pass the time, the reality is that the artistic process is often a challenging one, and one that requires dedication, patience and the learning of new skills (National Alliance for Arts in Criminal Justice 2010). There is a long tradition of the arts being used within custody to motivate and engage learners, with much good work by voluntary and community sector organisations in support of that. Future employment or self employment in, or associated with, the creative arts and crafts can for some represent a potential pathway to a life free of crime.

Despite only making up 5% of the UK prison population, entrant statistics published by The Koestler Trust relating to their annual art awards indicated that women made up around 13% of single entrants in 2011 (Porter 2012). That figure rose to 14% in 2013 (Porter 2014).

Engagement in the arts with the possibility of fresh vision, or at least a glimpse of a different life, often provokes, inspires and delights (BIS & MoJ 2011:19).

Engaging with the arts has a significant part to play in improving physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The arts provide a route to better health and wellbeing while health provides a route to the arts that can help to overcome persistent inequalities of access.

(All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, Inquiry Report 2017:20-30)

Engagement with the arts can promote the discovery of new connections, relationships and meanings, which in turn provide the person with alternative perspectives on life and relationships with others (Karkou and Sanderson 2006).

The element of enhanced identity formation and creating a new or replacement self through such artistic engagement is first glimpsed at in this respect.

Identity formation

This study looks at the concept that successful 'rehabilitation' of the individual requires the forming of positive identity, sense of direction and a sense of agency. It critically analyses this notion through the consideration that engagement in the arts whilst incarcerated can support a model of underlying desistance that requires a more 'holistic' approach rather than traditional modes of rehabilitation. The prospect of employment for instance may be a distant one but within reach once many other steps have been taken to change a person's perspective on their situation (Nickeas 2013).

Through critical analysis this research will examine and critically assess the ways in which access to the arts within female prisons can support the desistance process through indications of identity formation, independence, personal growth and self-sufficiency. It will do this by ascertaining the impact that access to the arts has on a group of desisting females reflecting on their time spent in custody and the ways in which it might support them upon release.

The theoretical framework of this enquiry will examine the relationship between Giordano et al's (2002) four stages of desistance and Margaret Archer's theory of reflexivity (2003). Desistance from crime, the long-term abstinence from criminal behaviour among those for whom offending had become a pattern of behaviour, is something of an enigma. Producing or encouraging desistance is the implicit focus of much Criminal Justice policy, practice and research; it is one of the key outcomes that justice interventions are designed to achieve and much research treats reducing or ending offending as a key measure of effectiveness (Farrall et al. 2012). The desistance process allows an individual to work through a 'process' rather than a quick fix solution of simply becoming employed to become 'rehabilitated' and deterred from committing future offences.

Inevitably, many women will enter prison with complex needs, physical and mental health problems and issues surrounding relationships. Women account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm in prison and are five times more likely to have a mental health concern than women in the general population (www.womeninprison.org.uk 2017). Baroness Corston (2007) suggested that mental health problems were far more prevalent among women in prison in the UK than in the male prison population or in the general population. Up to 80% of women in prison have diagnosable mental health problems (Corston 2007).

Engagement with the arts can support such vulnerable groups through the discovery of new connections, relationships and meanings, which in turn provide the person with alternative perspectives on life and relationships with others (Karkou and Sanderson 2006).

Identity and art

Developing, finding, restoring or preserving personal identity whilst in prison is a difficult and complex affair. This research will explore whether engagement in the arts can facilitate the building or maintaining of a personal's identity. The practice of art allows the participant to experience creative freedom with direction provided in a 'person centred' way, i.e. the tutor/teacher takes on a mentoring or support role. Art can be seen as an indulgent affair in the way that it can be justified solely by the efforts of the maker who has inherently created it. It requires a person to think for his or herself and agree and work to one's own project briefs. Whilst a person may receive creative guidance they ultimately set their own aims and expectations. However, it allows for the visualisation of reflection, meaning and viewpoints to materialise themselves in a way that satisfies the artist. In this way the person is able to identify with what they are creating and explain how they feel in a non-verbal way.

Dalton (2001) suggests that as a result of research and psychological study around identity within the context of arts education, classification arising from personality, taste and talents exist from an early age. Psychology was built on the two major discourses of arts education, behavioural psychology based on observations of

'normal' child behaviours and responses to stimuli, strengthening and legitimised the evolutionary stages and classifications that were already present in sequenced drawing schemes. Respondents would be categorised into groups ranging from the 'norms' and 'subnormal' to 'deviant' and 'abnormal', enabling teachers to differentiate and plan the curriculum appropriately (Dalton 2001:63).

Experiments in drawing have been extrapolated to apply to all art and craft practices in the classroom, and the fragmentation of art making into stages and differences, which appeared to correspond with natural human development has meant that art education could be delivered in progressively organised systems of teaching and learning that would apply to all students, whatever their background and differences (Dalton 2001).

With this mind this notion can be applied to the dynamics of the prison art room and the diversity of the women engaging in arts practice. Ultimately subgroups and visible identities are evident with the classroom and levels of interest and engagement will differ from person to person. In her evaluative report of prison arts based programmes with women offenders Leverett-Morris (2014) identified the need to balance individual and group needs. Through participant engagement, artists involved in the programmes reported the need for women to express themselves through means of: identity, validation, creativity, acceptance, fun and support.

In respect of identity, recognition of the whole person was key since respondents did not want to not be defined by negative traits, labels or 'history'. Instead they wished to be valued as an individual and to be noticed as an individual, receiving praise individually. As a discipline, the arts have the potential to encourage

reflection; challenge and foster personal growth and there are many examples of how high quality and accessible arts processes support and empower vulnerable women (Leverett-Morris 2014). For instance, prestigious Galleries The Watts Gallery in Guildford and the Lightbox in Woking work with vulnerable groups of female offenders and ex-offenders who are struggling to come to terms with imprisonment or release through the facilitation of a number of arts programmes. Street Level Art is an example of one project for those recovering from drug and alcohol addiction, homelessness and mental health problems. As part of the project, the group partakes in monthly workshops at the gallery, and has had the opportunity to explore a variety of creative activities, including clay modelling, painting, drawing and print-making (Davey 2015:4). There are examples of how participation and achievement in the arts motivates, inspires and helps women to develop the skills needed to lead a more positive life (Women's Support Centre, Surrey 2015).

In the context of this research using two major discourses of arts engagement-to measure and decipher psychological stimulant-and the interpretation of the physical practice of art I will aim to establish the extent of art in decoding participant identity. What is more poignant is that this research will question whether engagement in the arts can influence identity and classification in terms of shifts and progressive development as opposed to merely determining it.

Summary: the study

This research revolves around the case studies of eight women who previously engaged in the arts whilst incarcerated at the same women's establishment in England and were released between 2012 and 2014. The group is diverse in age, length of sentence, ethnicity and background and is representative of a cross selection of the female prison population. All participants have been recruited following a long period of sustained investigation and observation at the prison and agreed to being interviewed in the community. All eight women worked in the art department in various roles including classroom assistants and jewellery makers.

The pursuit to follow a person's progression or success in reaching her goals she has expressed whilst in your care is accelerated by the fact that several of the woman in this study having made comments to indicate that they would like to continue with their creative interests in the community and made reference to this throughout the length of their sentence.

These women stood out as individuals that embraced the arts whilst in prison and appeared to have benefitted from it on a personal and to some extent a professional level. This research follows the lives of these women since they left prison and tracks their progress and personal development to establish and determine whether the positive experience of the arts whilst in prison has/is supporting them in the community. These women were selected due to their high regard for the arts in prison and arising from observations made whilst working with them in a professional capacity. The individual case studies describe a woman's journey through the emotional turmoil of dealing with imprisonment, drug dependency, being

separated from children and loved ones and facing up to their offence or repeat offending.

The observation period of interacting with the women whilst in prison took place between August 2011 and June 2014. Contact was made with participants and interviews and dialogue in support of this research began in September 2014 after I left the establishment as my place of work. Interviews will aim to address issues surrounding lives before prison, personalities and motivations and look to establish the role of the arts in relation to dealing with their incarceration.

Chapter 2: Literature Review



Introduction: carrying out the search

This literature review was conducted by considering texts relating to women's imprisonment and more specifically issues potentially concerning the participant group. It is mainly situated in Government reports, policy and information produced by charitable resettlement organisations. The search broadened to concepts around identity theory (including identity formation and the acquisition of agency)

and the interplay between the production of art and personal narrative. From this it was possible to review and select relevant theory and theorists that formed the basis of the project's theoretical framework. I sought texts that were profound in the area of offender learning and arts engagement and consolidated the search and analytical review to key texts that specifically dealt with the evaluation of interventions with female participants.

Consolidation of the literature search

This literature review is structured around themes arising from the preliminary research questions. As a result of investigation and avenues that the search explored both intentionally and holistically those questions were revised and refined. Realising early on in the research that past criminal history and art as therapy were not lines of enquiry I wished to explore the focus shifted to art as an activity to support individuals moving away from crime. Instead, reoccurring themes around identity and personal narrative drove this literature review. I first began to consider the concept of desistance as a result of interrogating the question of how people actually move away from crime and rebuild their lives. Key themes arose from concepts and ideologies around women's imprisonment and how they may rehabilitate themselves.

My previous experience of working with the sample group and the cohort relating directly to the study together with previous studies I had conducted highlighted a codified theme of identity formation and personal narrative consistent with ideology around the creation of artwork. Considering theories of desistance became integral

to this research from an early stage. Delving into the history of women's imprisonment in the UK quickly developed available provision for the incarcerated women in terms of access to education, work and programmes as a means of opportunity for rehabilitation, enrichment and better quality of life. This is articulated here in respect of notable reviews and reports of the female prison population spanning the last decade. I consider the impact of the reports' findings and recommendations upon the lives of incarcerated women.

Arising from what I discovered from conducting this literature review of what the issues reflecting female offenders concerning individual needs I began to consider identity and prison sub cultures. This moved the review into schools of thought around social identity theory, agency of the incarcerated women and feminist thought concerning identity and personal narrative of the inhibited female self. From this study came the need to select an appropriate theory and theorist(s) that would inform the theoretical framework and support the hypothesis and background of the research. The relevance and poignancy of feminist thought around agency and personal narrative became apparent when attempting to articulate the importance of singular studies for male and female incarcerated individuals. Appreciating that women offenders engage and respond to interventions differently to men I was keen to dispel some themes in the literature that evaluated the impact of prison arts upon both sexes within the same study (see Bilby et al. 2013; Gussak 2011; Johnson 2008). Subsequently, this led to the consolidation of study around feminist sociological thought and in particular the work of Margaret Archer.

Looking at identity formation and the quest for agency amongst incarcerated women took this literature search away from static models of identity theory. This is how it came about that I first considered 'shifts' in personality or identity that may set

someone on a different path, either to recovery or by means of returning to a previous life/identity previously enjoyed before enduring something as catastrophic as incarceration. The notion of a transient identity or re-establishment of agency once enjoyed as a free person has informed the literature review and methodology that follows, considering a process driven by self-reclamation.

Although 'art' features in the thesis title, the research questions and forms the practical element of the focus of participant engagement in the research, it is mentioned here as a catalyst or method of rehabilitative measurement rather than means of rehabilitation. An analysis of the role and position of arts within prison examines the paradigm of arts engagement and practice and the relationship between identity formation, desistance and rehabilitation.

Women's imprisonment

Women's imprisonment and the issues effecting incarcerated women differ dramatically from that of their male counterparts. Many imprisoned women for instance are mothers and the primary carers of children. Imprisoning mothers is counter-productive and costly to the state, both in the short and long-term, and could often be avoided if courts took proper account of primary caring responsibilities in sentencing decisions, and women were supported to stay with their children (Prison Reform Trust 2014:6). In 2014 the Prison Reform Trust reported the following information and statistics concerning women's imprisonment:

Children – In 2010, an estimated 17,240 children were separated from their mother by imprisonment.

Domestic violence – 53% of women in prison report having experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse as a child, compared with 27% of men.

Mental health – 46% of women in prison have attempted suicide at some point in their lifetime. In 2013 women represented 26% of all incidents of self-harm in prison despite accounting for less than five per cent of the total prison population.

Drug and alcohol addictions – 52% of women in prison said that they had used heroin, crack or cocaine in the four weeks prior to custody, compared to 40% of men. Practitioners report that women may hide or underplay substance misuse through fear of losing their children.

Housing – Around one-third of women prisoners lose their homes, and often their possessions, whilst in prison.

Employment – In 2011-12 just 8.4% of women leaving prison had a positive resettlement outcome on employment. For men the proportion was 27.3%.

(Prison Reform Trust 2014:14)

There are higher levels of chronic diseases and substance misuse compared to the general population (Crosse et al, 2016). Women experience criminal justice very differently from men; 53% have experienced childhood abuse (sexual and physical), 50% have observed violence, 31% have been in care and have a history of substance misuse and homelessness (Carlen and Worrall, 2004). Women are imprisoned further from home than men and receive fewer visits (Women in Prison, 2013). They accounted for 26% of all self-harm incidents in 2014, despite representing just 5% of the total prison population (Ministry of Justice, 2015).

Women represent only five percent of the prison population in England and Wales (www.womeninprison.org.uk 2016) and are held in 12 prisons. It is therefore necessary to ensure that their small numbers do not result in less favourable treatment, through careful consideration of their particular needs (Robison 2013:3).

It is heavily documented that many women will enter prison with complex needs, physical and mental health problems and issues surrounding relationships. Women prisoner's needs are particularly acute in the areas of: self-harm, substance misuse, maternity care and sexual health. According to NOMS (National Offender Management Service) a much higher percentage of women than men will require psychiatric reports to be written (Prison Service Order 4800:12).

Data from Holloway between 1998 – 2003 demonstrated 60% of all new Receptions into prison required clinical detoxification. Women were typically using between 6-9 substances at the time of arrest with 50% of those treated also reporting alcohol dependency. 75% of these women were injecting drug users. Of the remaining 40% of women not admitted for a clinical intervention, half were also found to be misusing substances. It can be concluded that at least 75% of women entering Holloway were misusing substances at the time of arrest.

(Prison Service Order 4800:13)

Most women entering prison have a range of interrelated needs. The term 'complex needs' has been applied both to women who are highly distressed and to those who present as having mental health related issues or personality disorders. For some women these issues can manifest themselves in challenging behaviour (Women in Prison 2016).

There have been two key texts in the past 10 years that have directly influenced government policy and thought surrounding the future of female imprisonment in the UK, Corston's 2007 review and Robinson's 2013 review of the female prison estate. The latter resulting in the closure of one establishment considered to be unsuitable to house women. Baroness Corston was commissioned by the Ministry of Justice to review the landscape of the female prison estate in the wake of six women's deaths in one UK establishment between 2005 and 2006. Corston (2003) had a pivotal role in influencing the improvement of conditions for women prisoners (in her

capacity as Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights) when her recommendations saw an end to females being incarcerated at Broadmoor Hospital alongside male prisoners.

The Corston Report

The Corston report (2007) emphasizes the need to differentiate male and female prisoners further as she found there to be prolonged inconsistencies concerning the care of women in custody. She also identified a range of social and emotional factors contributing to women committing crime, issues that many carried on dealing with once in custody. She claims that women have been marginalised within a system largely designed by men for men for far too long and there is a need for a 'champion' to ensure that women's needs are properly recognised and met. Women and men are different. Equal treatment of men and women does not result in equal outcomes (Corston 2007:3).

Overall, female offenders are a vastly different group with different needs and problems to male offenders. The criminal justice system seems to have a very different effect on them, so policies and programmes directed towards men will often not be useful (Loucks 2004). The historically dominant and generally accepted view is that males are much more likely than females to commit delinquent acts, and that when females deviate, their misconduct is significantly less serious than that of males (Cernkovic and Giordano 1979).

The report also recognised incarcerated women as victims in many circumstances, highlighting issues of abuse and domestic violence. It recommended that these factors be taken into consideration when dealing with these women once incarcerated and beyond release. Baroness Corston (2007) stated that mental health problems were far more prevalent among women in prison in the UK than in the male prison population or in the general population. The term 'complex needs' has been applied both to women who are highly distressed and to those who present with a range of mental health related issues or personality disorders. The literature certainly supports this notion with the estimate that almost all prisoners have had some form of problem with alcohol and/or drugs in their life (Carlen and Worrall 2004). Other issues such as psychological distress, abuse, poverty and unemployment also characterise the vast majority of women prisoners (Loucks 2004). This has led to some women believing that their options are limited (Home Office 2000).

Review of the women's estate

Robinson (2013) identified that women prisoners should be held in suitable accommodation and have access to a range of appropriate rehabilitative and through the gate services. Her report gave emphasis to the development and indicated that the expansion of life skills programmes and means of personal and social development for incarcerated women. This was to include increased provision promoting: to include independence skills classes, classroom assistant roles and motivational work. It suggested that confidence building through personal

and social development was key to the success of other targeted and specialist programmes intended for a range of rehabilitative needs.

The review consulted incarcerated women themselves, reaching all of the 12 female establishments (covering England and Wales) housing women at the time, recognising that imprisoned women needed stability, support and confidence in preparation for life. There is a need for more meaningful resettlement which can continue on release, in line with the government's rehabilitation programme and the ability to access interventions to reduce the risk of reoffending and meet women's needs (Robinson 2013:10).

Both Corston's and Robinson's reports firmly shifted the focus from common denominators such as work and training as a means of rehabilitation onto personal and social development, mental health and wellbeing. In 2013 the government produced an update on the delivery of the strategic objectives for female offenders in response to Corston's 2007 review. It recognised that women face very different hurdles from men in their journey towards a law abiding life, and that responding appropriately and effectively to the problems that women bring into the criminal justice system requires a distinct approach (House of Commons Justice Committee 2013). Ministers responded to the report by stating that a strategic document on the priorities for women would be published 'in due course'. However the appointment of a new ministerial team and the subsequent acceleration of the introduction of payment by results delayed this and any specific strategy for women offenders or those at risk of offending (House of Commons Justice Committee 2013).

Historical context

In a penal system dating back to the 12th Century, women prisoners in England ceased being held in the same institutions as men in 1902 thanks to the efforts of Elizabeth Fry and fellow prison reformation activists. Matrons and even female superintendants were also recruited to work in female prisons as opposed to a heavy presence of male wardens (Carlen 2002). However, discrepancy remains in the treatment provided to female inmates once incarcerated and some provisions do not go far enough in differentiating the gender gap and addressing individual needs. In the first instance, the majority of female prisons in the UK were not originally built for purpose. Many institutions were originally built to house male prisoners, some are disused hospitals, orphanages or even former munitions factories. The suitability of the facilities currently being used to incarcerate women often arises in the literature, especially when assessing the housing of detoxing women or children and babies for example.

Reoccurring themes throughout the history of female imprisonment dominate prison reformation. In 1942 the newly appointed Chairman of the Prison Commission Lionel Fox highlighted that not enough attention had been paid to the specific problems of women in prison and interventions were both infrequent and in many cases non-effective.

In 2013 the Secretary of State for Justice commissioned the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to conduct a full review and needs analysis of the custodial female estate in England and Wales. Recognising that women offenders had particular needs, the prerequisite of the report was that women's imprisonment

should be organised as effectively as possible in order to meet gender specific requirements whilst also delivering best value for the public (Robinson 2013).

Carlen (2005) challenged the ideal that enquiry and review into the women's estate has not been conducive to the ongoing anomalies and inconsistencies with the treatment of female prisoners were a byproduct of imprisonment itself and that lessons were not being learnt from mistakes and unsuccessful programmes for use with women. Acknowledging that jurisdictions have developed in-prison programmes, policies and strategies designed to address women's needs; Carlen (2005) suggested that the system is in fact 'feeding off of itself'. Carlen (2005) argued that public enquiries into women's imprisonment simply result in the same recommendations being made. Her thinking centered on a 'three-pronged reform strategy': reformation of prison regimes, radical reduction in numbers sent to prison and increased community provision. However Carlen (2005) suggests that only the prison regimes changed. Identifying that a more 'holistic approach' to rehabilitation and in-prison treatment strategies was needed, Carlen was concerned with assessment of the prison regimes once a woman was back in the community. Courts, impressed by claims about the efficacy of the in-prison programmes in meeting criminological need, and not hearing much about the community programmes or the research which suggests that the claims of the psychological programmers are ill-founded, send more and more women 'at risk' to prison (Carlen 2005:118).

Prisoner education

The range and diversity of the learning and skills offer within prisons varies between establishments, owing to size (prisoner capacity) and demographic. However basic skills provision in terms of literacy, numeracy and ICT is offered widely throughout the prison estate. In the general population around 85% of people have literacy skills at level 1 or 2 whereas in prison this is only 50% (Creese 2015:5). In terms of numeracy 50% of the general population have skills determined at level 1 or 2 whereas in prison the figure stands at 43% (Creese 2015:6). Similarly, ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) provision features heavily within the prisoner education landscape as foreign national prisoners currently account for 12% of the overall prison population in England and Wales with 4% of this figure being women (Allen & Watson 2017:12).

Both public and private sector prisons are subject to Ofsted inspections and work on a mandated curriculum offer as outlined by the Offender Learning and Skills Service overseen by the Government body, the Skills and Funding Agency (SFA). Prison education provision is widely outsourced to education providers and contractors (often further colleges, education consultancies and charitable organisations), although some private prisons provide their own provision in line with minimum OLASS requirements. Education providers receive payment according to delivery and performance, encompassing qualification offer and accreditation rates.

Therefore it is of paramount importance to the education provider that accredited programmes feature within the curriculum offer. However, there is literature to suggest that the use of non-accredited programmes for use with individuals and groups of prisoners are just as valuable when supporting rehabilitation. Fox (2014) suggests that non-accredited programmes are significant in promoting creativity and

imagination amongst participants in an alternative approach to rehabilitation.

Accredited programmes have satisfied the criteria set by the correctional services panel, are consistent with the 'what works' literature and produce evidence of effectiveness throughout their existence. However, 'non-accredited' programmes are also being delivered (Fox 2014).

Similarly, in the 2011 Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) review of offender learning it was acknowledged that a top-down focus on targets and delivery fails to deliver the right conditions locally to meet the complex needs of offenders.

'In our view the scale of demand for learning, in prisons or in the community, is such that the provider should be seeking to identify and offer a programme suitable for each individual – presumably within an inventory of the programmes available. Priorities would be determined locally on the basis of the availability and value for money of the identified programmes'.

John Brenchley, Head of Offender Learning and Skills Group, OCR (2011)

Art in prisons

At present, when nearly half of those in prison go on to re-offend within a year, it cannot be said that our Criminal Justice System is working (Michael Gove in O'Brien and Robson 2016:3). There is a great need to review education and purposeful activity delivery in order to establish more meaningful outcomes for individuals leaving prison and indeed supporting them through their sentence. Although many prisons are working hard to offer good provision, education is constrained in terms of the options available, the length of courses, and the level (Hurry & Rogers 2014:160).

In her review of prisoner education Coates (2016) found that a number of prisoners have greatly benefitted from Personal and Social Development (PSD) education incorporating the arts. She witnessed engagement from some prisoners where they have (perhaps for the first time) been given the space and support to reflect on who they are and what they want to achieve. PSD can be a very effective progression route to more formal education. It can help learners with additional difficulties engage with the prison regime (Coates 2016).

As part of the recommendations of the Unlocking Potential review Coates (2016) concluded that there should be no restriction on the use of education funding to support the creative arts and Personal and Social Development opportunities. These can be used to engage prisoners in education and support them to make progress against their Personal Learning Plan.

The provision of art, drama and music courses is not a core part of current OLASS arrangements. Where they do operate, and where there have been one-off projects or performances with visiting arts companies, they are often the first thing that prisoners, staff and Governors tell me about. The arts are one route towards engaging prisoners when they have had negative experience of traditional classroom subjects, or struggle with self-esteem and communication. They can be the first step towards building confidence for more formal learning.

(Coates 2016:29)

The breadth of prison arts experiences includes both individual participation and also peer-organised arts experiences (Gardener et al 2014). In a 2011 Government report it was stated that there is a long tradition of the arts being used within custody to occupy, motivate and engage learners, with much good work by voluntary and community sector organisations in support of that. The report recognised the role that the arts, collectively, can play in the rehabilitation process through encouraging self-esteem and improving communication skills as a means to

the end of reducing reoffending. Future employment or self employment in, or associated with, the creative arts and crafts can for some represent a potential pathway to life free of crime. Engagement in the arts with the possibility of fresh vision, or at least a glimpse of a different life, often provokes, inspires and delights (BIS & MoJ 2011: 19).

Research concerning the arts in Criminal Justice System is on the increase, with over 80 research reports and evaluations currently accessible through the National Criminal Arts Alliance (a society of arts practitioners and organisations) evidence library website alone. While the literature offers plenty of reasons to believe in the potential of prison art programs, their effectiveness has rarely been tested in empirical research (Gussak 2006).

Researchers such as Johnson (2008) have highlighted the benefits of creative rehabilitative activities, extending well beyond prison. Incarcerated artists can make valuable aesthetic contributions to society. For one, their work can be put on display in museums, galleries, and other venues for the public to enjoy (Johnson 2008). Like most people, prisoners desire to be productive and will seek creative autonomy and outlets for expression (Caulfield 2014). Aesthetics-enhanced rehabilitation programs provide such outlets for creative expression. Perhaps then, incarcerated individuals will become more seriously involved in rehabilitation programs if opportunities for creative expression are provided, which in turn should boost the programs' potential to enhance reform and reduce re-offending. Also, it seems that art programs can improve the daily operations of the prison and promote a safer environment for both prisoners and staff (Johnson 2008).

Caulfield (2014) stresses importance of such a notion in her evaluative study of artist in residence programmes in HMP Grendon. In this climate of significant change, there is a call for increased development of offenders' vocational skills, which aims to ensure increased levels of employability for former offenders (Caulfield 2014).

There is clear potential for increased outside engagement and further display of work from the residency across the prison. Many of the wheels have been set in motion to develop outside work and these should be continued and new areas of work sought.

(Caulfield 2014:5)

Caulfield (2014) assessed and evaluated the results and impact of arts programmes used with groups of male prisoners at the prison over a 4-year period. HMP Grendon is considered to be a therapeutic Community prison, housing those with severe complex needs. The research portrays HMP Grendon to be an institution that uses art as a means of therapy as well as for the diversification of personal and social development. In this respect the prison engages with artists in residences to work with incarcerated individuals displaying a range of behavioural issues. Caulfield's evaluation of the impact of such an intervention provided one example of a longitudinal study considering art as a tool for self-restoration and rehabilitation. She states that the residency in the prison environment has raised the profile of the arts through the notoriety and professional status of the artist.

The link between the participants and the outside world is of great importance. In her recommendations Caulfield's (2014) puts emphasis on the role of external agencies and partnership links. She claims that there is potential for increased outside engagement and further display of work from the residency across the prison in order to develop and establish outside work. Personal and social

development relating to openness, responsibility, a supportive nature and creative developments have been enhanced and sustained as a result of engagement in the residency (Caulfield 2014).

Unlike the nature of this research, Caulfield (2014) as the researcher is an outsider and observer, reliant on observation of an intervention rather than involvement in the delivery and established relationships with participants. The researcher is a third party who is evaluating using data gathered essentially by the artist in residence who has formed those relationships with the participants. From these observations Caulfield is able to conclude that participation in the residency enables individuals to begin to redefine themselves, an important factor in working towards a successful, non-offending future; replacement self.

Identity, agency and art

Identity and knowing one 'self' is the driving force that motivates us to achieve in life, informing our decision making and leading us on certain paths (Eriksen et al. 2016). Positive identity formation provides us with the ability to make more informed choices. Identity affects human experience, facilitating the establishment of our relationships with other people, and it represents a way for ourselves to reflect on who we are as individuals (Dagnall 2015:1). For many women who arrive into custody, low self-esteem and poor self-image contribute to a lack of motivation and confidence. Having your freedom taken away and being separated from loved ones can be detrimental to one's personal identity (Dresser 1990).

Confinement in an artificial environment can challenge the notion of self. My experiences of the conscious world I live in are formulated by my interaction to other people, places and objects. The loss of community identity, in my case, is replaced by a pseudo-identity with new challenges, experiences and phenomena to explore. Prison is like a reserve, a sanctuary for and from society where one can reflect on experiences and immerse oneself in the interactions of its artificiality.

(Dave C, undergraduate student and serving prisoner in Dagnall 2015)

Once a person becomes part of the prison population they can lose the sense of independence and individuality. When a prison number is assigned they can easily lose sight of their identity. Where a person may have been known as 'mum, the teacher, the nurse, the lady from the shop' she may be now known as 'the thief or the fraudster on D wing' (Shumba 2010). As one former prisoner suggests, once incarcerated your view of the person you see in the mirror changes; 'I saw people who went into prison as CEO, Directors and great leaders but the moment they got confined, they lost all that they thought they were worth' (Shumba 2010). People can easily have a good judgment of your personal worth based on how you view yourself. If you always undervalue yourself, do not expect others to value you (Shumba 2010). Cursely (2012) suggests that previous studies in the arts in prison have not sufficiently explored a person's movement from abandoning one role and appropriating another one through the exploration and development of identity.

The Reflect Project

Intrigued by the concept of loss of freedom and control, Bell (2014), filmed and photographed convicts in an American prison writing letters to their younger selves. He describes the results as heartfelt and gut wrenching; none of the participants set out to become criminals or spend chunks of their life or in some cases the rest of their lives in prison. Poor decision-making and a negative view of the world and personal identity have contributed to the destination of each inmate (Bell 2014). Being able to reflect on this is a healing exercise that requires that individual to be honest and open and can be likened to primary desistance. The act of writing down one's emotions, feelings, deepest regrets and despairs opens them up for scrutiny as the acceptance and understanding of others is par for the course in positive identity formation.

If a person is able to gain the trust and autonomy from those they wish to convince of their change in behaviour, forgiveness, progression and acceptance could happen for that person. 'Our bad choices can contain untold loss, remorse, and regret...but the positive value of these bad choices might be immeasurable if we can face them, admit to them, learn from them and find the strength to share' (Bell 2014). The opportunity for an inmate to express himself or herself in a safe and acceptable manner, can re-label the identity from that of inmate and can instil a sense of hope, self-value and humanity in an environment that otherwise suppresses it (Gussak 2006).

Agency and the incarcerated

The existence of a sense of agency is vital to the process of effective identity construction (Foucault 1979). The diminished agency involved in imprisonment has a severe impact on the prisoner's self. Michel Foucault described such individuals as 'docile bodies', for whom the power of the authority (the prison) is enacted. In *Discipline and Punish* (1979) Foucault depicts his prisoners as being completely controlled by the total institution and unable to assert themselves. In contrast the modern day prison provides the ability and right for the prisoner to attend work and/or education as a means of self-improvement and intended catalyst for rehabilitation of the individual. One key theme shared by all incarceration narratives is an articulation of the prison's momentous effect on the prisoner's *or* former prisoner's sense of 'self' (Richmond 2010:13).

Foucault (1979) maintained that a lack of agency stems from the premise that prisoners are stifled by the prison regime and unable to assert themselves. In the case of most prisoners, an assertion of agency, often through resistance to the dominant power is in the case of most prisoners, an assertion of agency, is an essential part of their survival. Whilst the person is attempting to take the initial steps in regaining their independence of identity and agency, imposed structure intervenes to jeopardise the process, leaving the individual reliant on the actions and decisions of others.

Whilst it may seem contradictory to punish a prisoner when attempting to reform them, the premise is to institutionally initiate a change in the personality of the prisoner. Texts that document the experience of prison often reveal the ways in which the prison, as the dominant authority, attempts impose this change. Prison

acts as a seemingly unified method of imposing the moral beliefs and objectives of the state upon the prisoner.

Foucault (1979) considered prisons to be like a strict school, disciplined barracks or dark workshop whose main tool was to transform the inmates in line with the ideals and demands of the state. He viewed too much over-assertion or intervention from the incarcerated individual in relation to his or her own rehabilitation as destructive in the eyes of the state. A critic of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* Bosworth (1999), asserted that prisoners are not docile and that they can and do assert their agency through resisting authority with differing levels of success. Bosworth (1999) believes that the capacity to define oneself as an agent is crucial to surviving imprisonment.

The prisoner therefore constitutes herself as a subject through the process of becoming an agent, of choosing action, rather than being an object. As will be shown narrative plays a pivotal role: it is a means of resistance to prison and in this it becomes a key means through which the prisoner creates agency and a sense of self. There are, of course, other non-linguistic means of obtaining agency available to the prisoner, such as physical acts of resistance to authority (rather than writing thereof) but the focus here is on how she uses language to assert who she is in response to incarceration (Richmond 2010).

Personal narrative

Richmond's (2010) gender orientated analysis of self narratives written by women prisoners in Germany throughout the 20th Century considered how the writer 'performs' femininity within the de-feminising context of prison and how well she did this negotiates self-representation as a woman. The texts demonstrate the author's endeavors to achieve a sense of autonomy and reclaim the experience of prison using narrative. The expression of writing and relaying narrative as highlighted in the study resists the imposed identity as a persistor (Moffitt 1993) and product of the criminal justice system. Johnson (2008) states that a key theme in the narrative is the articulation of the effect of incarceration on the former self. This relates to how an individual perceives themselves prior to their incarceration and inability to continue with a former identity as a free person. The study dealt with how a woman defines her 'self' rather a 'self' in prison.

Richmond theorised (2010) that on occasion, incarceration can shame and cause insecurity. This is largely attributed to the domination of the institution over its inmates, as well as the stigma attached to being in prison (Richmond 2010:17). Johnson (2008) suggests that by their very imprisonment woman prisoners feel that they are unnecessarily labeled and criminalised, resulting in their de-feminisation. Much of the self may be constituted from 'inside'-by one's memory, feeling and subjectivity, much of self making is from outside in-based on the apparent esteem of others and on the myriad expectations that we pick up from the culture in which we are immersed (Bruner 1986:65).

Richmond (2010) states that it is the writer that negotiates with her audience, impacting on her level of agency. Through writing the individual is able to survive

the prison experience without losing too much of her former self. In many ways, this correlates with the function of prison writing: adaption to the situation of incarceration and the relationship, but empowering the self through engagement in a particular enrichment activity.

Creating purpose of existence and making sense of the situation of being incarcerated through personal narrative enables the prison writer to 'perform' and create an identity that suits her desired self-image (Richmond 2010:28). Gready (1993) explains this as the ability for the individual to 'rewrite' and thus recreate her identity. Although the narrative is personal to the creator, the thoughts and experiences are documented and are potentially intended for the eyes of others. First person accounts from or about prison function as a type of evidence – the writer's truth – presented to the reader in order to explain the writer's incarceration (Richmond 2010:25). Therefore the writer will be conscious of how their offerings of self-representation will be interpreted. This can often be magnified for the prisoner as misconception and misinterpretation is inevitable. Richmond (2010) describes self-narrative as a step towards attempting to gain public acceptance in order to combat the stigma of imprisonment and, perhaps more significantly, a way of gaining control over a situation in which much autonomy over one's identity has been stripped away.

There is a *negotiation* between how the writer sees herself and how others should see her. There is an effort on the part of the writer to negotiate as 'ideal' an identity as possible.

(Richmond 2010:25)

There is the notion here that honesty, integrity and personal acceptance of the content of the narrative that is offered up here whilst trying to gain understanding and empathy from the audience. However Richmond's focus is not merely on how the incarcerated women's texts are received, instead the reasoning behind

constructing such self-representation in relation to the world around her is under review. Self-representation is dependent not only on audience but also on the context in which the text is written and published (Richmond 2010).

There exists a negotiation in all narratives between autonomy and commitment to others; indeed the two are interdependent (one needs others to constitute the self and vice versa). Bruner sees commitment to others as agency robbing, but I perceive it as part of a whole process of agency-creation: all that is written is there to serve the approval of an audience and in this way to constitute, or repair, the self. Through the rhetorical function of language, the writer has power over her audience as well as being judged or partly constituted by them. As the researcher I share this opinion in the respect that there is a need to seek others' approval to some degree in order to dispel myths around an individual's imprisonment.

Desistance from crime

Historically, criminological research and theories around rehabilitation had concentrated on the reasons behind 'why' people became involved in criminal behaviour rather than 'how' and 'why' people moved away from crime. The latter is the study of desistance, the long-term abstinence from criminal behaviour among those for whom offending had become a pattern of behaviour. Liebling and Maruna (2013) suggests that if you want to know what is working well and what has worked when considering and evidencing successful rehabilitation you need to look at people who have been released and are rebuilding their lives. Producing or encouraging desistance is the implicit focus of much criminal justice policy, practice

and research; it is one of the key outcomes that justice interventions are designed to achieve and much research treats reducing re-offending as a key measure of effectiveness (Farrall et al. 2012).

Researchers such as McNeill and Whyte (2007) have characterised desistance as being promoted by life events, depending on the meaning of those events for the offender, desistance may also be provoked by someone 'believing in' the offender. This belief is considered to be a strong denominator when the individual considers change and motivation for change. Desistance is connected both to the external, social aspects of a person's life (such as the supportiveness of those around them) and to internal/psychological factors (such as what they believe in and what they want from life).

A Ministry of Justice report (2013) identified that having someone believe in them is important to desisters and that desistance can be supported by interactions with others who communicate a belief that they can and will change. The report also suggested that factors such as: getting older and maturing, family and relationships, sobriety, employment, not having a criminal history and having a place within a social group acted as key indicators for measuring desistance. The desistance process requires key 'indicators' and opportunities that allow change to happen and identity to form.

Desistance allows an individual to work through a process rather than a quick fix or results based solution such as employment in order to become 'rehabilitated'.

Rehabilitation of the individual extends far beyond the limitations of simply 'finding a job'. It encompasses the mind and how a person sees their self, others, and the world around them. The prospect of employment may be a distant one but within

reach once many other steps have been taken to change a person's perspective on their situation (Nickeas 2013). Desistance is about 'redemption' or restoration and often involves finding purpose through 'generative activities' (Batchelor et al. 2005:4).

Origins of desistance

The study of desistance is a relatively new phenomenon in criminology, however desistance theory can be traced as far back as the 1930's. The Gluecks (a husband and wife team of criminologists) were active between the 1930's and 1960's and unlike most of the criminologists at that time they were concerned with the termination of criminal careers as opposed to the onset of offending. However, it was not until the 1970's and 1980's that interest in desistance increased dramatically. The growth of interest in this field at that point was partly the result of a wave of longitudinal research projects that had been initiated several years earlier (Calverley and Farrall 2006).

The Gluecks considered time and aging to be the most measurable of aids in deciphering the efforts and results of interventions and discourses involving individuals that were attempting to move away from crime. They saw the benefits of longitudinal study, considering a person's behaviour and life course, concentrating on the aspects of their life that led them to commit crime. This theory of 'maturational reform' continues to be the most influential model of desistance in criminology with researchers such as Maruna (2001, 2003, 2006) using it as a basis and rationale for subsequent studies involving the notion of self-narrative and positive identity formation. Desistance is usually defined as the end of a period of

involvement in offending. Most researchers therefore think of desistance as meaning that an individual has given up offending permanently, rather than just ceasing to offend for a short while before continuing to commit further offences (Calverley and Farrall 2006).

The problem of reconviction

The increased interest in the study of desistance can be attributed to high rates of reconviction and a growing prison population. For too long, reoffending rates have remained consistently high, particularly among short sentence prisoners (Wright 2013). According to the Prison Reform Trust (2016) the overall prison population in England and Wales grew by 20% between 2012 and 2014 and a recent report claimed that between 2013 and 2014 19,383 prisoners were being held in overcrowded accommodation owing to high rates of reconviction. The report also claimed that the number of women imprisoned in England and Wales had more than doubled between 1995 and 2010. A 2015 Ministry of Justice report claimed that re-offending rates in the UK have remained stable since 2002. Even though there has not been a dramatic climb in the reoffending rates, imprisonment of men and women continues to increase with a rise. In 2012 the overall prison population stood at double what it was in 1993 (Ministry of Justice 2013). At the end of July 2017 3,961 women were in prison (Weekly Prison Population Figures, 2017, www.gov.uk).

Although women make up a relatively small number of the overall prison population (4.6% in England and Wales according to the Prison Reform Trust 2014), their reconviction rate continues to be a problem with as many as half of all women

leaving prison and reoffending within one year (Women in Prison 2014). According to Ministry of Justice figures however, 1 in 4 of those released from prison in 2012 re-offended within one year (Grierson 2013). Around 120,000 adults were proved to have re-offended between 2012 and 2013, women accounted for 18% of this figure (Ministry of Justice 2015)-resulting in their re-conviction. The Reform Trust (2016) attributes this to the notion that women are serving shorter sentences but in higher frequencies. Where women have served more than 11 previous custodial sentences the reoffending rate rises to 75% (Women in Prison 2016).

For many of these women returning to their old lifestyles and pattern of offending would breach their terms of their license in the community resulting in their return to prison. Kilroy (2000) states that post release issues are significant for the survival of women after prison and in regards to recidivism. Upon their release women are expected to 'survive' within the community. Although there are programs that are designed to identify and aid these women in their problems while incarcerated, the opportunities for growth and integration into more functional lives ends with the females' release into their prospective communities (Thorn 2009). Returning to abusive relationships, addiction, homelessness will only ever contribute to further offending. The interventions that take place during incarceration need to be sufficient enough in providing confidence and self-belief enabling women to make the right decisions and not to return to previous lifestyles and non-contusive scenarios.

Women and girls who are caught up in the Criminal Justice System enter it as a result of circumstances distinctly different from those of men, and find themselves at a distinct disadvantage. What is of concern here though is that women should not just be treated differently in ways that disadvantages them, but in ways that enhance their reintegration into society (if they have been imprisoned) (Liddell and Martinovic 2013:136). O'Brien (2006) suggests that developmental strategies are required to take into account the marginalisation, victimisation and lack of opportunities either before or early in a woman's offending. This requires gender related responses that reflect the social realities of women, in order to enhance their successful community rehabilitation and reintegration (O'Brien 2006).

Theories and concepts of desistance

There have been a number of researchers who have presented their own theories and models of 'desistance' in relation to personal reformation, each acknowledging that there is a 'process'. Since the Gluecks (1937)-a husband and wife team of criminology researchers-first suggested that aging was the most significant factor in the reformation process other researchers have suggested that additional elements emerge as dominant. When comparing some theoretical approaches to desistance, there is disparity between factors such as: length of process, number of stages, accelerators for change and maturation. Glueck & Glueck (1974) claimed that so long as there were no neurological or biological defects, individuals mature mentally and physically and eventually break from offending. They concluded that those who continue to offend later in life have not matured yet. This thinking is limited to the belief that individuals will eventually adjust with age and turn their back on crime. It

does not account for future life events and external influences that may dissuade someone from making the right choices in life. The Gluecks did not identify a set chronological age for reformation nor did they account for individuals committing crime for the first time (or entering a life of crime) at a later stage in life.

Like the Gluecks, Moffitt (1993) believed that age was the main factor connected to desistance and how and when desisters moved away from crime. His dual taxonomy offenders consisted of those who had engaged in offending for a brief period in their life and those who had continually offended since their adolescence. He referred to these groups as 'adolescence-limited offenders' and 'life-course persistent offenders'. Life course persisters usually display early signs of antisocial behaviour (for example under-age drinking, premarital sex), can be excluded from social settings, and rejected by peers or teachers because of poor behaviour, weakening social bonds and development (Hearn 2010).

Moffitt's (1993) work with groups of young male offenders was limited to the actions, thoughts and experiences of the individuals at that point in time, very early on in their life and potentially early on in their criminal life (where offending did not cease). As no follow up study was undertaken with this same cohort it is impossible to say whether those individuals were adolescence-limited offenders. Limiting this study to young males exclusively also does not allow consideration as to whether young women could be categorised by the dual taxonomy. The transitional stage from one's teenage years to adulthood is immense and indeed shapes a future self, supports the development of agency and identity formation.

These early antisocial behaviours can act as potential indicators of future prolific offending, much like the age graded theory, offenders are likely to offend for longer and more seriously, as they are unable to arrive at alternative cognitive solutions and doomed to repeat the same social errors throughout life in alternative settings, such as relationships, marriage, education and work, leading to further social bond weaknesses.

I agree with Moffitt's suggestion that there is potential for adolescent offenders to socialise with life course persisters (those reported to be 'moving away from crime') whether in prison or external as a result of criminal activity and that this may influence certain detrimental choices that the young person may make. However, this contradicts the belief that there are only two types of offender, suggesting that in fact young offenders could be compromised by older adult and life course persisters, leading them to sustained periods of offending. This would indicate that age and maturation are secondary to nurture and internal and external influences. Criminal career research has shown that factors explaining why some people become delinquent in their early years are not always precisely the same as factors underlying persistence, including in some cases the commission of increasingly serious and harmful offences (Roberts 1997).

If prescribing to the underpinning principle that measurable desistance relies on 'age and time' then such a study of desisting juveniles is in danger of only capturing data that was only relevant at that point in time and has less bearing on the future 'developed self', the 'adult'. Cohen and Ezell (2005) challenged Moffitt's ideal of there being one 'type' of persistent offender, suggesting that there may be up to as many as six.

Lamb and Sampson (2003) concentrated their research in the context of the relationship between structure and agency, believing that many desisters lacked self-belief and exhibited poor decision-making and problem solving. This was a view also held by Hollin (1996) who was concerned with the thought processes and approaches to problem solving amongst probationers and prisoners. Planned interventions were designed to support offenders and ex-offenders in dealing with the ways in which they approached problems and interacted socially with others, often viewed as barriers to progress and sustainability in regards to keeping a job or developing positive relationships.

Criminologist Fergus McNeill (2013) describes desistance as the interplay between three sets of factors: aging, relationships and identity. People get older and they 'mature', along with the physical there are sociological and psychological changes associated with aging. These changes are social in character; people become bonded with different social institutions within their life courses, employment marriage or study for instance. These relationships shift within the course of a person's life affecting behaviour and determining identity and self-perception. The 3 strands interconnect, determining the level of involvement that the individual has over their offending behaviour, thus witnessing a shift in behaviour that promotes reintegration back into society.

McNeill (2013) believes that the third strand can be likened to a 'tertiary' stage of desistance where by a person develops the desired identity and is able to sustain a more purposeful and fulfilling life. This is theorised by likening primary desistance to changes in behaviour and a wantonness to take action. Secondary desistance is concerned with the transition from 'offender' to 'ex-offender' or 'desister' and tertiary

desistance is characterised by 'belonging', prompting the individual to question who they are and what matters to them most.

If McNeill's theory holds any credence, it would suggest that positive identity is developed as a result of the transitions and social developments that happen in a person's life and that maturity is a key component of this. This thinking again challenges Moffit's theory of desisting adolescents centred on 2 types of offender. It is plausible that one's identity, persona and the way that you view yourself may inevitably change over time as you mature as a person. The way that a person may behave in his/her younger years and the relationships formed with others may differ greatly later on in life.

Models of desistance

Shadd Maruna is a leading criminologist with a specific focus on the study of desistance. Maruna believes desistance not to be an event that happens but rather the sustained abstinence of a certain type of event occurring, seeing it as being a 'process' rather than an 'event'. The suggestion that individuals do not simply fall into neat dichotomies of desisters-persisters, innocents (Maruna 2011)-offenders, victims-victimisers etc supports the notion that studying the person's 'life story' is far more fruitful in understanding their motivation for moving away from crime and choosing certain paths in life (Maruna 2011). Unlike personality traits, which tend to be largely stable over time, a person's narrative identity can and *does* change throughout life (Maruna 1999).

Maruna's philosophy is to identify the common psychosocial structure of underlying self stories and therefore outlines a phenomenology of desistance. This belief that all desisting persons take on a personal narrative that supports his/her pursuit of a crime free or life extended beyond the parameters of criminality and reoffending takes into account other factors that contribute to offending behaviour. This involves how a person views himself or herself, their actions and the repercussions and this reflexivity would potentially act as a driver for change.

Maruna's perspective challenges the theory that previous considered key drivers for change such as family relationships and employment to be secondary to the internal thought process and how one views themselves and their actions and that better informed choices are made once a person starts viewing themselves differently rather than as a result of the expectations of others. He has also considered ex-offenders who have only committed one or two crimes in the context of desistance but for whom rebuilding their lives and turning their back on their offence(s) was hindered by their present self and surroundings. This is relevant to this thesis in relation to the stories and experiences of some of the participants involved.

Maruna (2001) believed that whilst catalysts for change were external to the individual, desistance was reported as an internal process which enabled the 'real person' to emerge. This notion encourages us to think about rehabilitation of the 'whole person' instead of simply implying that a desisting person needs to find a job or repair relationships with parents for instance on the premise that this can only be truly achieved and then sustained once the person has seen themselves in a different light.

This notion of independence and self-direction in order to influence change and take action is supported by Giordano et al (2002). They are some of the few researchers who have looked at desisting females as a separate entity with a view to establishing the different ways that women address their offending behaviour and subsequently attempt to rebuild their lives. They considered the desistance process to be a 'four part cognitive transformation'. The process is described as involving: 'general cognitive openness to change'; exposure and reaction to 'hooks for change'; or turning points; the envisioning of 'an appealing and conventional "replacement self"; and a transformation in the way the actor views defiant behaviour.

The theory is based on the premise that the person acknowledges the need for change and actively seeks out change becoming proactive in their recovery. Giordano et al (2002) argue that the 'author' creatively and selectively draws upon elements of the environment in order to effect significant life changes. Calvery and Farrall (2006) describe this as the way in which he/she (the desister) works towards a model of desistance that draws agency and structure together via the notion of a 'blueprint' for a future self.

Calverley and Farrall (2006) considered the lives of men and women after they had been released from prison, examining their in-depth social and personal lives once they had completed their probation supervision in the community. They highlighted the issue that many have problems immediately after release and throughout their release and questioned what happened to them thereafter. Interviewing a sample of desisting men and women on probation in the community in 1999 and subsequently again in 2003 they captured the stories of respondents who had completed their probation. They wanted to know if the desisters who had initially

indicated that they were committed to change their lives around had actually done so. Whilst there is the suggestion that in some indicators for the causes of crime and subsequent reoffending may be similar for certain groups of offenders, their means and methods of 'giving up crime' and rebuilding their lives may be entirely different. Giordano et al (2002) concluded that comparable studies of desisting men and women for instance were inconclusive believing that in many instances women had far more complex needs and external factors that were pertinent to their recovery.

Social control theory emphasises the ways in which a close material bond or stable job gradually exert a constraining influence on behaviour as-over a period of time-factors build up higher levels of commitment via the traditional frameworks of family and work (Giordano et al. 2002:991). Essentially social control is focused on the long haul, which involves moving towards, helping to craft and working to sustain a different and/or better way of life. This is when the person actively looks for what Giordano et al. (2002) describe as 'hooks for change'. These act as motivators and drivers and are identifiable by the researcher. Giordano et al suggest that they are invariably (but not limited to) loved ones including children and spouses. They believe that such 'catalysts' are powerful in prompting change as they can have such a profound effect on the individual.

Desistance and women offenders

Calverley and Farral (2006) acknowledged gaps in the knowledge regarding desisting women, highlighting that few all female studies have taken place. Bowling and Graham's (1995) study of male and female offenders suggested that the processes and catalysts for desistance in the men and women involved were quite different. They found that for women, becoming 'an adult' (e.g. leaving home, finishing school and starting a family) was related to desistance, but the same couldn't be said for the majority of men in the study. Bowling and Graham (1995) made the recommendation that to accurately evaluate the effects of interventions and programmes for use with offenders and desisting persons, separate studies for men and women were needed. For instance, one study (which was not longitudinal) captured the age group of 15 to 25 year old males and females and the findings indicated that some of the males required longer to mature than the females within the same age group and that this could have potentially presented a different overall outcome.

Art and desistance

To the extent that desistance from crime is an internal process of personal reform, it is important that programmes and interventions within the criminal justice system (including resettlement programmes upon release) create practical conditions that allow participants to exert an autobiographical narrative. This allows them to think and talk about themselves at present and in the future (Cheliotis 2014:80). A number of recent studies focusing on the delivery of arts programmes within the

criminal justice system have explored the concept that such rehabilitative discourses could potentially act as accelerators and motivators for desistance.

The inspiring change programme

In 2010 researchers from the University of Glasgow evaluated the outcomes of the 'Inspiring Change Programme', a series of 6 arts intervention programmes piloted across 5 Scottish prisons. In the 2011 report the authors acknowledge that the evaluation of the coordinated arts projects in 2010 had come within a relatively short time of the interventions ceasing. This resulted in no real systematic attempt to follow up the fortunes of participants in Inspiring Change (in prison or after release) over any meaningful period. The researchers were able to capture the participant's expectations (and doubts and skepticism) before they became actively involved in these projects and their still vivid responses immediately afterwards. Therefore, the elements of change in attitude, confidence and self-awareness that surface here may or may not be ones that turn out to be sustainable for the long term. To be able to make claims about that with any certainty would require a different kind of study, supported over a much longer period (Anderson et al. 2011).

Through this capture of observational data (including verbal responses from participants) the researchers claim that there is evidence to suggest that 'secondary desistance' has taken place. This includes the active development of positive identities consistent with starting to move away from crime. Moreover, some of the concluding interviews with staff and with the arts practitioners, as well as confirming in broad terms the findings from the participants themselves, provided indications of changes enduring beyond the lives of the projects themselves. However, we cannot

confidently claim impacts on subsequent behaviour or offending history (effects known in the literature as 'primary desistance') (Anderson et al. 2011). It is unclear how a researcher(s) can determine the move towards secondary desistance when evidence to support primary desistance taking place has not been established or presented.

Much of the 'evidence' gathered from the study can be likened to the primary or 'first stage' of desistance-an openness to change-through participation and engagement in arts-based projects. To establish the impact on or move towards secondary desistance-hooks for change-would require a follow up analysis. Anderson et al defend their research by insisting that establishing and understanding the opening stages of the desistance process is vital if interventions are ever to have any positive bearing on people's lives.

Participants of the various projects (including those who had been released from prison) were not able to reflect on their experiences or consider the possible long-term impact that such interventions may have had on their lives. One of the reports' recommendations however was to design and resource future evaluations that would follow up participants, talk meaningfully about outcomes, compare systematically between properly matched groups of participants and non-participants, and so on.

Re-imagining Futures: Exploring Arts Interventions and the Process of Desistance

One study by researchers at Northumbria University and Bath Spa University suggested that engagement in the arts has an impact on how serving prisoners view themselves and their future potential (Re-imagining Futures: Exploring Arts Interventions and the Process of Desistance, Arts Alliance UK 2013). Willingness to take risks can be associated with a participant's move towards being open to the possibility of changing their behaviour, outlook and life (Bilby et al. 2013). The study argued for a positive link between taking part in arts-based activities and the movement towards secondary desistance. It claimed that participants saw changes in self-identity and improved feelings of confidence and self-esteem, allowing them to begin to redefine themselves.

Bilby et al (2013) suggest that following a series of short interventions with groups of male and female participants in four criminal justice settings, research identifies the ways in which arts practice can start to develop the indicators for secondary desistance: changes in self-identity and personal agency and the development of social capital. However, in most cases the interventions took place over a one-week period, in what could be viewed as an insufficient time frame to measure 'secondary desistance'. The research team spent at least four sessions with each of the projects observing the activities (Bilby et al. 2013).

The findings of the report suggest that for desisting persons to benefit, individuals and agencies involved in delivering arts-based interventions have their part to play in regards to: identifying and managing support for individual change; creating and sustaining hope; recognising and developing individual strengths; developing social

and human capital; working with and through relationships; and recognising and celebrating progress. The researchers saw these as key elements and indicators for measuring the impact of interventions, however the report lacked substantial evidence to support this ideal.

When desistance focuses on human positive change and development the evaluation of short lived interventions may not produce a cohesive amount of evidence to suggest that the secondary desistance process has been reached and that a participant is set on a specific pathway (Farrall et al. 2012). In these instances, further in depth study is required over a longer period with a more personalised approach. In a critical overview of the report McNeill et al. (2013) identifies the need for longitudinal research, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to assess how far the findings presented are sustained in the long-term.

The impact of art interventions of this kind can only truly be measured through the following of participants' process and attitudes/behaviours in response to their offending over longer periods. For instance, follow up studies that involve locating the prisoner within the community or further down the line in their sentence should be carried out. The other issue or barrier to research being carried out in this way is the fact that the research represents an external agency and is not placed within the day-to-day prison environment. When outside agencies deliver short-term interventions that do so without the daily constraints of the permanent education provider. Some prisoners are often better behaved or more engaged during these workshops or courses as the persons delivering them are 'new faces', something different, someone who is not there to uphold disciplinary procedures, someone without the use of keys and is not duty bound to the operational functions of the

prison. Where this is a positive aspect of delivering learning to a more engaged group of prisoners, the downside is that research could potentially be undertaken under a false sense of security.

Delivering stand-alone projects can give an accurate picture of a prisoner's progression and can sometimes only capture a snap shot in the desistance process. Gathering observational and anecdotal evidence from a week or two-week intervention is not a sufficient study for the measuring the impact of art as a catalyst in the desistance process. A lot can be said for knowing one's participants when conducting research in these kinds of environments, especially when tracking progression. McNeill et al. (2013) however believes that the practice of art and the work itself can act as a form of communication between the viewer (or researcher) and the maker, representing the transformative processes. This can potentially close down the social distance between people by inviting them to share experiences and emotions, to understand (not just in the cognitive sense) their common humanity, maybe even to build the reciprocities on which 'the good life' depends.

Arts-based activities and interventions are not intended or designed to directly address specific 'criminogenic needs'. For prisoners, just as for everyone else, they are first and foremost an opportunity to engage with our own humanity and with our potential for growth and development (McNeill 2011). Growth through art is seen as a sign of growth of the whole person (Karkou and Sanderson 2006).

The findings of Bilby et al's (2013) study demonstrate how the arts activities undertaken by participants provided the medium through which they were able to

reflect upon their own self. In this sense, the art facilitated reflection, leading to changes in self-perception, and potentially changes in behaviour. Environments and programmes designed to focus specifically on redefining the self – such as therapeutic communities – typically do this work over many months and years. What is clear from the literature here is that participants in these arts projects were experiencing these outcomes over a much shorter time.

We suggest that the space for reflection created through the artistic process is one of the most significant factors in promoting this change. Indeed, all of the projects showed that they had helped participants to think differently about, or redefine themselves. While none of the participants described themselves as artists, they considered themselves to be people who had achieved something and who were successful. This encouraged participants to try new challenges, often arts-related, or to use the knowledge they had gained about the arts practice in another environment. This sense of redefinition is one of the most important elements in desistance.

(Blby et al. 2013:50)

Immersion is the art of plunging into and surrounding ourselves with a focal area of study. Hyland Moon (2005) describes this as becoming involved with study of art not merely through our mental faculties but also through our living, breathing selves. The achievement of completing something new, or developing a different type of artistic skill is recognised by the participants and the arts practitioners running courses. This achievement has an impact on how individuals view themselves and therefore on how they view their future potential, this willingness to take risks can be associated with a participant's move towards being open to the possibility of changing their behaviour, outlook and life (Bilby et al. 2013:53).

Bilby et al. (2013) explains that having an embedded arts project in a criminal justice agency enables participants to join, leave and then rejoin the project once they demonstrate the first stage in the process of desistance-openness to change. This could then ultimately mean that a short-term project run by an external agency (outside of prison) may be able to act as the 'hook' for change, the second stage of

desistance. However, their study does not necessarily address the third and fourth stages of Giordano's et al's (2002) process as follow up studies with participants were not undertaken upon release, they focus firmly on intermediate outcomes:

Intermediate outcomes are easier to identify if arts programmes are embedded in the criminal justice agency and 52 [separate agencies] are working with people who are on longer sentences. Embedded projects are able to track changes in individuals over time, although the importance of the professional status of the arts practitioners should be remembered here so as not to confuse embedded external projects with core educational programmes.

(Bilby et al. 2013:53-54).

The Arts of Desistance: Evaluation of the Koestler Trust Arts Mentoring Programme for Former Prisoners

A study that has looked beyond the confinement of prison-based research is the 2014 review of arts mentoring through the Koestler Trust. The report was the culmination of over six years worth of research into the impact of engagement in the programme (facilitated by the UK's biggest prisoner arts charity) amongst ex offenders living in the community. As 'mentees', ex-offenders are assigned a suitable arts mentor who will help them identify what specific support they would like to get from the mentoring scheme e.g. applying to further education, finding their way around their local arts community, and with the support of the Koestler Trust, decide upon a timeframe and number of mentoring sessions through which they can achieve these goals (www.koestlertrust.org.uk 2016).

The mentoring scheme is aimed at prolonging and enhancing desistance from crime through providing former prisoners with opportunities to continue engaging with the arts after release (Cheliotis 2014). The evaluation focuses both on the

implementation and effectiveness of the scheme through a systematic 'following' of the participant journey. Cheliotis (2014) acknowledges the notion that many of the follow-up studies of arts-based programmes with offenders/ex-offenders commonly suffer from key methodological problems, including, notably, the lack of a control group.

The report suggests that criminological scholarship disproportionately addresses the relationship between the arts and imprisonment. This is largely due to a focus on the development and effectiveness of formalised, practitioner-run prison programmes that claim to 'empower' and 'rehabilitate' prisoners by introducing them to the arts. A further and, arguably, related tendency in pertinent criminological scholarship is that arts-in-prisons programmes and their research evaluation are approached uncritically, devoid of the socio-political dimensions of their context, content, conduct and consequences (Cheliotis 2014:16).

Evaluations of arts-based interventions in the fields of criminal justice and 'aftercare' have rarely employed control groups, and quasi-experimental designs incorporating both pre-and post-test measurements have remained infrequent. These are significant threats to the validity of causal inferences; namely, they cannot but undermine any conclusions as to whether particular arts-based interventions actually led to particular outcomes.

(Cheliotis 2014:80)

The report indicates that participants of the mentoring scheme benefitted from (amongst others): enhanced self-esteem, a greater sense of achievement and empowerment, improved learning capacity and motivation, and improved social skills. Psychological and attitudinal benefits required that mentees held and sustained realistic expectations about life after release from prison, including about developing a professional career in the field of art (Cheliotis 2014).

The life span of this research validates the findings and is able to pinpoint specific areas of personal and social development amongst a group of desisters.

Relationships between the mentor and the mentee were closely observed and case studies were used to articulate findings including: changes in attitude, social standing, potential and opportunity and general outlook on life. The data implies that the positive effects of the mentoring programme can endure only if the provision is sustained, both within criminal justice settings and in the community. However Cheliotis acknowledges that the process of desistance is typically fraught with difficult and persistent challenges (such as unemployment or lack of housing) can work to undermine the positive effects of mentoring scheme.

Summary

There is sufficient evidence presented in this chapter to conclude that arts programmes delivered in prisons and to those affected by the criminal justice system have beneficial and positive outcomes for the participant. The use of case studies, focus groups and interviews with serving prisoners and detainees as well as ex-offenders have shown that arts engagement has been empowering and developmental for the individual.

Given the evidence presented here to support the statistics concerning women's mental health and wellbeing in prison it is sufficient to suggest that interventions should cater to these needs and promote a cohesive learning and development area. The formulation and delivery of arts based programmes is no exception and should reach these vulnerable groups and as such the validity of interventions

should be evaluated. As I discussed, disproportionate numbers of women offenders-in contrast to the male counterparts-are experiencing some level of psychological issue or implication that impedes their progression within the criminal justice system. This is ultimately having a negative affect on intended successful outcomes of re-entry programmes as drivers for reducing reoffending.

Both Corston's (2007) and Robinson's (2013) reports on the female prison estate highlighted the need for appropriate accommodation and the improvement to the physical prison environment for women. The literature also recommends that the development of personal and social skills as well as the acquisition of life skills are addressed in the wider needs analysis of vulnerable groups of female prisoners. This has drawn focus away from employment initiatives alone as a main indicator for the reduction of reoffending and reconviction and promotes greater emphasis on soft skills and the development of the individual. This typically includes confidence building and self-sufficiency.

As discussed there is a growing body of research into the evaluation of arts programmes and interventions with prisoners. From the literature it is apparent that few studies have been able to assess the long-term affects and impact of arts engagement in prison with long serving prisoners and more specifically, after sustained periods of release. Many of the evaluations reviewed in this chapter have focused on indicators of possible secondary desistance as a result of active engagement in arts practice during periods of incarceration. However, these have vastly been based on the observation and evaluation of short programmes or staged interventions by the researcher.

Caulfield's (2014) evaluation of an artist in residence in HMP Grendon highlighted the importance of viewing projects over time, giving consideration to those who are able to reflect on their experiences. This particular research also portrays the impact of the project from the observations, experiences and opinions of the facilitator of the project rather than an external researcher or agency reviewing the intervention. Caulfield's (2014) study is similar to the scope of this research project in its approach to retrospective accounts of those currently engaged in (or those who previously engaged) prison arts based activity. It also offers crucial insight from the practitioner researcher and their relationship with the project(s) and the participants.

As fore mentioned, the detrimental impact of imprisonment on the mind and soul preventing an incarcerated individual from asserting him or herself. Foucault (1979) described the stifling of imposed prison regimes on the self-expression and individuality of the incarcerated person through a lack of control and autonomy. In much of the research discussed here freedom of expression and the concept of personal narratives facilitated by arts engagement is defined as being crucial in the quest for a sense of agency and positive identity forming.

Richmond's (2010) critical analysis of texts written by political women prisoners highlights the notion of retention of self and the desire to be seen as the person and not the prisoner. Contextualising their experiences within prison in conjunction to a life before incarceration gives purpose to the individual. Allowing them to share their experiences gives them a voice and connection to the outside world that may otherwise be suppressed. The practice of art has often been used as a similar platform to negotiate personal narrative. Prisoners may inevitably seek to restore a

former self through (identified as being that of before imprisonment) in some dimension as a means of retaining self-worth and independence that is notably erased by the imposed regime and the conformity that characterises imprisonment.

Theorising models of desistance has demonstrated the role of identity in the change process, aiding rehabilitation and the development of a replacement self (see Giordano et al. 2002, Calverly and Farrell 2006 and Maruna 2001). The concept of a replacement self or the emergence of the 'real person' as a result of successful intervention or engagement in purposeful activity is widely documented by criminologists and desistance based researchers. Whilst theories may differ in the scope of perimeters of desistance stages and indicators for change, supposition of shifts in identity and self-perception are shared by theorists. Internalised thought and talk as practiced by the desisting individual is brought about through a desired change or reformation within the individual (Giordano's et al's 2002).

In this chapter I have sought to establish a link between the desistance process, self initiated change for rehabilitative purposes and arts interventions (see Anderson 2011, Bilby et al. 2013 and Cheliotis 2014). The use of case studies and life stories through the appreciation of an individual's artwork and experiences of creative practice within prison have been articulated through words and images. Much like my own research, the studies that I outline in this chapter place the participant at the centre of the issue, giving a voice to an unrepresented group of artists.

Some of the gaps in knowledge identified within this chapter concerning existing theory and studies of a similar nature have informed my own research. These include longitudinal and retrospective studies of prison arts projects, the situation and positioning of the researcher within the research and their relationship with

research participants and respondents and the evidencing of secondary desistance. In the following chapter I discuss the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this research-indicative of this literature review-and explore the links between rehabilitation, identity formation and engagement in the arts.

Chapter 3: Methodology



Introduction

The stories of each woman in the sample will be articulated through a series of interviews and greater understanding of the physical artworks (as explained and interpreted by the participant) with the sole purpose of answering the following research questions:

How can/do the arts within prison promote and support agency amongst a group of women in prison?

Prompting these prominent (but not exclusive) questions to be asked of research participants:

- How did art support them through day-to-day prison life?
- How has it prepared them for release in terms of their personal and social development?
- What role does art play in identity formation with a group of female ex-offenders?

Theoretical framework

This section will outline the methodology applied in the research project. It will outline the criminological model of desistance developed by Giordano et al. (2002) and Margaret Archer's (2007) theory of identity formation, making links between the two theories in an attempt to answer the research questions. In order to caveat this ideal I will critically evaluate whether an individual can develop or re-establish an identity as a result of the creative activities they engage in during incarceration.

Archer (2003, 2007) considers the internal conversation to be the key to the required mediation between personal and social powers. It is the unappreciated inner process, which, by connecting personal concerns to one's circumstances, completes the works of the mechanism and affects mediation of sculpture and agency through provision of a space in which individuals can make decisions, involving the explicit consideration of structural constraints.

The individual relies on self-knowledge and prior stability of their own decision-making to guide them in their reaction or solution to the issue presented to them. I would suggest that when considering the mind of the incarcerated individual thought goes beyond that of daily occurrence such as deciding where one will go on holiday or what shopping they need to buy. For instance, the deliberations of the repentant or suffering mind as a result of imprisonment may place a larger burden on the individual as they deliberate their future and coping mechanism.

In the context of prison, much decision-making responsibility is removed from the incarcerated individual. In what Foucault (1979) describes as a 'docile body', the imprisoned mind can become idle, inactive and reliant on the control of the imposer of the regime in an act of submission to their environment. The notion of freewill and determinism that Archer (2003) characterises free thinking autonomous individuals by proves problematic for incarcerated persons, even if they experienced greater ability of reflexivity prior to imprisonment.

Archer (2003) describes the 'self-knowledge' that individuals seek through their inner deliberations as a soul-searching exercise in order to reach a conclusive decision. Even if one has this enhanced ability to extrapolate internal self-knowledge to their benefit through meaningful inner dialogue prior to imprisonment there is no guarantee that this could be maintained during incarceration. Factors associated with imprisonment such as shock, confinement, entry to different social circles and social standing can potentially prove detrimental to the autonomous thinkers' freewill and determinism.

Even though a restricted sub culture of society, the prison environment is a structural facet of wider society given its diversity and population and therefore it is possible for individuals to acquire agency through the activities they choose to engage in. The structural bonds of the physical environment can determine to what extent the individual may assert their choice activity or pastime. For instance, a person that chooses to express him or her self through the drawing they undertake in their cell can only do so by order of what the prison will allow them to produce as appropriate subject matter and materials. Restrictions on access and quantity of materials will differ from establishment to the next in line with local security policy; the relationship between the individual (the maker of artwork) and the staff will also play a role. The amount of property a prisoner can have in his/her cell is limited to property, which fits into two boxes. This equates to about six cubic feet of property (Butterly 2015). The Incentive and Earned Privileges Prison Service Order 30 (figure 1) sets out the restrictions and quantities of arts materials:

Prisoners will only be allowed to hand out or post out hobby items if they have purchased the materials required to make the particular item.

Any items made in the cell must not be so large as to restrict normal movement in the cell

Kera Colour	-	29101 Paintbox (all colours)
Paint	-	Maximum 12 tubes up to 25ml size
Acrylic Varnish	-	Maximum 2 paints up to 25ml size

No oil based paints.
No thinners allowed.

Figure 1: Prison Service Order 30: Incentives and Earned Privileges, Ministry of Justice 2013)

Certainly within the prison where the participant group were/are incarcerated (referred to throughout this thesis as *HMP Sale*) there are many restrictions on what women can keep in their cell. This includes what they are able to take from the art room as a continuation of their studies. The women prisoners are not permitted to

sketch images of their cells, windows, doors and locks, the landings or the view from their cell for security reasons. Yet these oppressive symbols of confinement and imprisonment are widely used by incarcerated artists to articulate their turmoil and state of mind. The prohibition of usage of the physical environment of prison as subject matter does not deter people and every year the prison arts charity The Koestler Trust continues to receive prison themed pieces of visual artwork for entry into its annual competition (*see fig 2 and fig 3*).

The defiance that these individuals demonstrate comes from one of rebelling imposed censorship of artwork. No liberal expressive and progressive free artist would need to censor their work in such a way, yet for the prison artist deliberating as to what is and is not acceptable is another dimension of control and oppression of the internalisation prior to action of the incarcerated individual. The suggestion that prison artists are continuing to produce prolific work and are managing to bypass prison staff and security by the external submission of it to agencies facilitating the exhibition of prisoner artwork could indicate a greater level of control even if rebellious in its approach.



(Left) Figure 2: *Thinking of You*, Guernsey States Prison, Commended Award for Hand-made Greetings Cards, 2014 (courtesy of the Koestler Trust).

(Right) Figure 3: *Morning Has Broken/Rise and Shine* HMP & YOI Holloway, Gold Award for Painting 2015 (courtesy of the Koestler Trust).

The maker-in this instance the prison artist-can be seen as being in control of what they want to produce and depict to others in the form of an artwork. They are also laying themselves bare through the depiction of himself or herself as a prisoner in an unattractive and unwelcoming place, whether to shock or welcome criticism through acceptance over their circumstance but willing to invite others (the audience/viewer) to be part of the experience. Those individuals displaying this amount of autonomy may have achieved this through a methodological process of self-monitoring when selecting their subject matter and allowing the artwork to reach the scrutiny of the outside world.

To ascertain the thought process of participants in this research I have devised a set of questions dealing with initial emotions of imprisonment, the decision-making process of selecting artistic practice as an activity or pastime and the depiction and interpretation of artwork produced in relation to the viewer.

Appropriation of role and identity

Developing, finding, restoring or preserving personal identity whilst in prison is a difficult and complex affair. This research will explore the notion that the engagement in the arts can facilitate the building or maintaining of a person's identity. The practice of art allows the participant to experience creative freedom with direction provided in a 'person centred' way, i.e. the tutor/teacher takes on a mentoring or support role. Art can be seen as a selfish affair in the way that it can be justified solely by the efforts of the maker who has inherently created it. It

requires you to think for yourself, agree and work to your own project briefs. Whilst you may receive creative guidance you ultimately set your own aims and expectations. However, it allows for the visualisation of reflection, meaning and viewpoints to materialise themselves in a way that satisfies the artist. In this way the person is able to identify with what they are creating and explain how they feel in a non-verbal way. Archer (2000) states that individuals acquire their social identities from the ways in which they personify the roles they choose to occupy. However, what array of roles is open to them at any given time strongly conditions and influences the acquiring of social identity. Whereas Giordano et al. (2002) believe that all persons (in the context of prison identities or desisting persons) can become 'actors', Archer (2003) suggests that not everyone can succeed in becoming one, as they do not always achieve in finding their role in life. Archer (2003) does however believe that personal identities have the capacity to evolve as a result of the way individuals monitor, prioritise and accommodate their concerns about their social reality. It is on the basis of this priority of concerns that we embark on our life-projects and it is these concerns that shape our behaviour and actions.

Fractured reflexives

Archer describes the subgroup of 'fractured reflexives' as being persons for whom autonomy or purpose has been removed and therefore has led to an inability to conduct meaningful internal conversations. Through the inner conversation self-knowledge is (fallibly) attained and articulated, which may or may not later be extended into discourse with third parties. Internal questioning and answering are the real modalities by which we develop our self-acquaintance. Generically, we

‘introspect’ when we interrogate ourselves: be this practically, as in planning what we do next; or meditatively, as in pondering what our responses were to some event or information; or speculatively, as in considering our reactions to a problem or how we think we would react to a change of circumstance (Archer 2003:32).

Through meaningful inner dialogue individuals are able to come more conducive conclusions or reasoning when faced with difficulty and complex situations in everyday life. Most importantly, inner conversations are evaluative. Through inner dialogue, we prioritise our ‘ultimate concerns’, with which we identify ourselves. However, this reflexive defining of oneself based on self-knowledge clarified through the internal conversation is difficult for those displaying traits of a fractured-reflexive to fulfill.

What distinguishes the ‘fractured reflexive’ from the other subgroups is that his or her internal conversation has no instrumental orientation at all. Their inner dialogue does not work as a guide to action (Archer 2003:303). Fractured reflexives are ‘passive agents’, they have a hand in their own self-monitoring and decision-making but ultimately they are reliant on others and the world around them to act on their behalf.

This is not to suggest that the individual has always demonstrated such apathy towards their life choices. In relation to groups of prisoners and ex-offenders their circumstances are likely to have been affected greatly due to their offence and/or subsequent imprisonment, potentially skewing their identity. Just as Richmond (2010) suggests, Carlen (1998) states that prisons (as institutions) are, from the perspective of the prisoners, essentially about loss of control over personal space and also about loss of control over time. Whilst Archer does not directly make any

direct correlation between incarceration and the development of this subgroup identity, she maintains that subjects have 'forfeited their control over his or her own life' (Archer, 2003:301), a concept that could be associated with incarceration.

This notion of 'involuntary fracturing' (things that happen to the agent both within and beyond their control) is pertinent to the context of this research and I foresee this subgroup as being groups of women during the early phase of imprisonment. Archer cites that personal circumstance and the changing environment in which the individual operates are at fault when the individual is characterised by this mode of reflexivity. Translated, this identity is thought to be determined through imposed inhibition and limitation of the actor's situation at a specific point in time and can be as a result of both voluntary and involuntary intervention.

Richmond (2010) describes agency as being 'diminished' by imprisonment, which would suggest that it was present to greater extent prior to incarceration. Foucault (1995) delineates such a prisoner as being a 'docile body', upon whom the power of authority (in this instance the prison) is executed. Using Archer's descriptor of the subgroup of fractured reflexives I will seek out the validity of these ideologies through the recollections of the research participant on an individual. Each participant will reflect on her early days of imprisonment and thoughts towards acclimatising to the prison environment in an effort to establish if such a decline in agency is tantamount to the distinguishing features of Archer's (2003) fractured reflexive identity. An understanding of the individual's past and standing within society prior to imprisonment will be crucial when interpreting possible similarities between Archer's prescribed persona and an opposed prison identity.

Communicative reflexives

The second reflexive of note in Archer's (2003) description of those interpreted as being 'communicative reflexives'. Archer describes 'communicative reflexives' as being reliant on others to confirm or dispel their deliberations through external consultation, believing that their decision-making would resolve inconclusively otherwise. These are people who do indeed initiate internal dialogues in the privacy of their own minds, but that is not where they complete them. Instead, their pattern is one of 'thought and talk' (Archer 2003:167). Archer explains this 'external reliance' as being closely coupled with a mistrustful decisiveness regarding private mental deliberations. The levels of self-doubt from this subgroup stems from a fear of failure or past poor decision-making. Whilst Archer makes connections between communicative reflexives and other subgroups discussed here, there is the acknowledgement that there is a 'missing link' between the positive intention of the individual and the ability to take action.

In her review of young offenders assuming identities within custody Cursley (2010) recounts the individual's pre-prison environment. Their self-protection and formation of status as they assumed 'prisonised' behaviour, and their reactions against the presentation of power and authority within the prison system were all factors influencing their sense of identity (Cursley 2010:127). In establishing the triggers and drivers in pushing forward this cognitive change in identity drawn from influence, acclimatising to environment and the forming of relationships with others will be critically reviewed. Identifying research participants' moves towards a sense of greater control and autonomy as supported by the impact and influence of others will aim to determine potential shifts towards communicative reflexive identity traits.

Autonomous reflexives

As with all reflexive activity, Archer describes the internal conversation process for

‘autonomous reflexives’ as being a private affair. The internal dialogue they share with themselves is private and they do not require the supplement from others. In other words, the life of their minds is a private domain, because to these subjects their inner deliberations are self-sufficient (Archer 2003:210). Conversely, as far as their lives are concerned, autonomous reflexives take responsibility for themselves and for the conclusions drawn from their own interior deliberations (Archer 2003:201).

Work is a main priority for autonomous reflexives; they are target driven and able to methodically plan for the future. Autonomous reflexives are not known for their dependency on others. Individuals are characterised by their ability to rely on their own judgments and enhanced self-sufficiency to progress in life. Archer acknowledges that some autonomous reflexives seek to distance themselves from their initial context of involuntary placement. Their ability to think subjectively and laterally about past experiences informs future conscientious decision-making. It is plausible to suggest that individuals in these instances-exercising variants of autonomous reflexivity have ‘evolving identities’.

Archer’s notion of self-accountability amongst autonomous reflexives reveals that subjects are more conscious about the impact or benefit of their actions upon the wider society. In terms of the concept of desistance, this could potentially lead the person to quantify past action and the effect on others on a personal level and in response to social and economic considerations. In other words, individuals can assess the consequences of their actions upon loved ones and the cost of their offending on society both financially and emotionally. This realisation presents the person as a reformed character, thus adopting a ‘replacement self’.

When discussing this reflexive identity and the extent of which an individual has

acquired this persona through means of enhanced identity as a result of arts engagement, a critical analysis of the participant in the community is required. Time will be key in establishing shifts in identity such as this and the ability to think critically and reflexively about the self. As Caulfield (2012) alludes to in her study of the life stories of women offenders, much of the existing literature simply states the prevalence of the past experiences of women in prison in a specific area of need. However, this fails to provide any insight into how women actually think and feel about their experiences and how this has impacted on the rest of their lives. Whilst Caulfield deals specifically with the offending nature of women's imprisonment, she makes relevant observation of the concept of personal narrative and being able to think reflexively as a means acquiring autonomy.

Meta-reflexives

'Meta-reflexivity' sounds like a complicated mental activity, but it is one that every normal human being practices at least on one occasion. It entails being reflexive about our own acts of reflexivity (Archer 2003:255). These individuals have the ability to think of their own accord, reach decision and then question the validity or reliability of that decision. This action is described as an act of 'self-monitoring' and is more of an internal deliberation and contemplation than it is about taking physical action. Meta-reflexives tend to withdraw into self-interrogation (Archer 2003). This ability to think reflexively and constructively is closely linked to a lifetime of varied and ranging experiences that form as part of a personal biography. For this particular subgroup this range of life experiences and the way that they have responded to them has enabled them to question their decision-making ability.

They are able to proceed with caution and reach the desired outcome once they have deliberated on past instances and played out the possible consequences of repetitive action and poor decision-making.

Meta-reflexives are constantly evolving as a by-product of their experiences and diversification of skills. Meta-reflexives are not good at permanent 'rooting' because there is always (eventually) something, if not many things, that they find wanting, undesirable or deleterious about a given context, which will generically impede the full expression of who they want to be (Archer 2003:258). In the context of this research and the desisting person this is poignant in relation to the individual's perceived ability to disassociate with a former way of life, social situation or standing or deviant behaviours. Meta-reflexives are idealists ever seeking a better fit between who they seek to be and a social environment, which permits their expression of it (Archer 2003:259).

This subgroup is driven to succeed as a result of drawing on past action in an attempt to better themselves and make more informed choices for the future. To establish the presence of this more progressive identity amongst research participants, I envisage that this subgroup's traits are more pertinent for those in the community following release from prison after sustained periods.

This research will seek to establish whether individuals that have now integrated back into society have done so through their commitment to continuous self-interrogation and self-improvement with the disassociation from past behaviours. Identifying a link between reflexivity to this degree and the desisting person will be

key in deciphering as to where identity formation sits in the recovery and reformation of the individual. Archer (2003) claims that respondents to her research on social identity theory-displaying the characteristics of meta-reflexives-often hiked back to the past, however their subconscious self-monitoring would take over to ensure that any negative memory or emotion did not hinder them in the now. In the case of the desister within the community, this concept could be instrumental in the person's ability to stay away from crime, lead a 'normal life', contribute to society and build better relationships.

The elements of control and self-censorship that characterise the meta-reflexive can be conceptualised when considering the desisting individual in terms of achievement against eventual and purposeful goals. Roughly translated, they may have established a more stable and productive life for themselves that they previously could not maintain prior to and during imprisonment.

Archer's theory of identity (2003) will be used as a tool in deciphering a participant's reflexive persona at a certain point in time, both current and retrospectively. This enquiry into the possible shifts in identity is borne from the theory and perceived understanding that a desisting individual may have the capacity to develop, restore or enhance a reflexive identity that is seen as a positive quest for autonomy following a period of imprisonment. McNeill et al. (2013) theorises this as being the 'tertiary' stage of desistance where by a person develops the desired identity and is able to sustain a more purposeful and fulfilling life. Changes are social in character; people become bonded with different social institutions within their life courses, employment marriage or study for instance. These relationships shift within the

course of a person's life affecting behaviour and determining identity and self-perception (McNeill et al. 2013).

A model of desistance: selecting a relevant theory

When considering progressive identities in the context of this research, there is the need to consider the criminological aspect of identity formation. All the women in this study have been subjected to imprisonment and experienced the aftermath post release. This suggests a link between a rehabilitative process and a quest for enhanced agency and identity formation; in this instance I will consider a model of desistance for contextualisation.

Arising from the literature review I have identified that there are several schools of thought around desistance theory ranging from Moffitt's (1993) taxonomy of two types of offenders to Cohen and Ezell's (2005) six descriptors of persistent offenders. Both of these particular researchers theorised that there is more than one apparent identity when observing offenders/ex-offenders as desisting persons. Moffitt (1993) considered there to be two types of offenders, describing these groups as 'adolescence-limited offenders' and 'life-course persistent offenders'. His sample however was limited as it consisted of a group of young male offenders and the study was lacking in follow up studies following sustained periods after release. Cohen and Ezell (2005) used Moffitt's theory to underpin their study that examined patterns of crime among persistent offenders and established the existence of a group of adolescent-limited offenders. Unlike Moffitt's, their study found there to be six different types of persistent offenders.

Moffitt's ideal is too limiting whilst Cohen and Ezell's analysis is too broad to respect of this research. Categorising individuals by the path they took to offending or subsequent convictions is both limiting and inconclusive when establishing drivers for reformation. Desistance should be characterised by the promotion of life events and requirement of key 'indicators' and opportunities that allow change to happen and identity to form (McNeill & Whyte 2007).

Giordano et al. (2002) considered the activities that desisting persons engaged in during incarceration and beyond were imperative to the individual's development through enhanced identity formation. As an underpinning for this research to correlate and correspond to the use and mode of Archer's (2003) theory of identity I have selected Giordano et al's (2002) theory of cognitive transformation. This approach presents a 4-stage process that I will assimilate to Archer's (2003) reflexive subgroups in order to determine shifts in identity set against the participant's personal journey of desistance.

Giordano et al. (2002) consider time and aging to be the most measurable of aids in deciphering the efforts and results of interventions and discourses involving desisting persons. Unlike personality traits, which tend to be largely stable over time, a person's narrative identity can and does change throughout life (Maruna 2006:42). This concept of 'maturational reform' continues to be the most influential model of desistance in criminology with Giordano et al. calling on it to provide rationale for their 4-stage approach.

Theory of cognitive transformation

Conceptually, Giordano et al. (2002) distinguish four types of intimately related cognitive transformations:

1. A 'general cognitive openness to change'
2. Exposure and reaction to 'hooks for change' or turning points
3. The envisioning of an appealing and conventional 'replacement self'
4. A transformation in the way the actor views deviant behaviour

This theory emerged from data derived from a detailed longitudinal study involving 127 incarcerated women in the American state of Ohio during the 1980s. Many of the sample were interviewed again following their release in subsequent years in the 1990s. Whilst other researchers have focused on stability factors of social control such as marriage and employment (see Waite 1995 and Gallagher 2000), Giordano et al. (2002) consider the literature to be weak in these areas in relation to female desisters. Research on the life-course and criminal careers of female offenders is limited, and the theoretical underpinnings of the female crime literature are contradictory in several key respects (Giordano et al. 2002). In response to this Giordano et al's (2002) analysis addresses four basic questions: (1) are factors such as strong bonds of marital attachment and job stability predictive of variation in transitions away from criminal involvement for women as well as for men, (2) how do the experiences associated with race/ethnicity as well as gender influence desistance processes, (3) what additional factors, not identified in previous research on male offenders, might help explain female patterns of continuity or desistance, and (4) what are the mechanisms through which the various factors such as marital attachment become associated with favourable adult outcomes? (Giordano et al. 2002:997).

Stage one

Focusing on cognitive changes, rather than a small set of predictors provides a measure of conceptual flexibility when considering desisting women's drivers and motivations (Giordano et al. 2002). The individual's basic openness to change is seen as the most fundamental shift in their attitude towards their current self and potential self. Active engagement in the arts whilst in prison has the potential to enhance or accelerate this level of interest amongst individuals who might otherwise be disenfranchised.

In their 2013 study Bilby et al. report that both male and female respondents to prison arts projects were observed (from the viewpoint of tutors and prison officers) as being more cooperative with other inmates and staff and engaged in the prison regime with greater enthusiasm. All of these elements are linked to desistance (McNeill et al. 2012) and could potentially be viewed as openness for change. In the context of this study research participants will be required to reflect on their early days of imprisonment and recall their route into attending arts provision.

Stage two

This stage sees the individual's ability to latch onto opportunities presented by the broader environment. Mead (1964) suggested that key drivers as determined by the desister can serve as an organising process that actually helps to push along the changes. The ability for the subject to 'latch' onto key hooks for change will support the person to acclimatise with and utilise their surroundings, forging meaningful relationships and critically engaging with the work they are producing (Giordano et al. 2002). This research will analyse and evaluate how a participant's engagement in the arts may have acted as the/a hook in this context. This form of cognitive transformation focuses attention on the relationship between agent and environment (Giordano et al. 2002). Whilst a general 'openness to change' (as outlined in the first stage) sees the first cognitive shift, without hooks it is insufficient.

Bilby et al. (2013) suggest that relationships formed through engagement in the arts can motivate the individual through notions of collaborative working and team spirit (as peers) and by means of praise and encouragement (from staff and facilitators of arts programmes). Also, the acknowledgement from loved ones can play a powerful role in the individual's desire to engage and produce through art. Making art helps participants to reframe their own narratives, being part of a community that can succeed in producing work that they are proud of (Bilby et al. 2013). A fundamental premise is that both exposure to a hook and one's attitude toward it are important elements of successful change (Giordano et al. 2002).

In this research, the women will consider the relationships they formed within the art room and assess the importance of such in their progression and motivation during the period of incarceration. The quality of external influences and relationships will also be critically analysed in this context to evaluate their role as hooks for change.

For a hook to be seen as successful, the individual must make a cognitive connection and regard the new environmental situation as a positive development. Hooks for change can provide an important opening in the direction of a new identity and concrete reinforcement during all phases of the transformation process (Giordano et al. 2002).

Stage three

The ability to focus reflectively on the self enables a third type of cognitive transformation to occur. Individuals start to envisage an appealing and conventional 'replacement self' that can disassociate itself with deviant and destructive behaviour, the marginal one can be left behind. In the context of transformation reformation, identity provides a higher level of organisation and involves more than a mental tidying up, because the new or refashioned identity can influence better-informed decision-making (Giordano et al. 2002).

Establishing a role or purpose within the art room or as a result of making the artwork is pertinent to this stage in the desistance process. Celebrating achievements, from both inside and outside prison is important in changing participant's views of themselves (Bilby et al. 2013). It helps their social capital by creating a sense of community within the class (Bilby et al. 2013:16). The opportunity to exhibit work and receive feedback is of great importance as it can create purpose for the individual as they are starting to be seen for the person they really are or aspire to be as opposed to an offender.

'Now I see myself as an artist, as opposed to an offender'.

(Koestler arts mentee in Cheliotis 2014:11)

Bilby et al. (2013) also make reference to the ways in which participants of arts projects can respond to negative or challenging behaviour presented to them having engaged in arts provision:

Recently a piece of art which I had spent a significant period of time producing was defaced by a group of inmates. My initial reaction was anger and the need to distance myself from the problem. However, upon reflection I tried to understand why this attack had been made (indirectly) upon me... It's such I must accept that challenging issues will face me and that I must begin to use the various skills I am learning within treatment to neutralise 'old me' unhelpful thinking and behaviour. Moreover, I must... continue in my pro-social endeavours (art class) and not allow other people's negative actions to de-rail my own progress.

(Colin, Bilby et al. 2013:16)

This demonstrates the negative elements, or non-cooperation, that can happen within the art classes, but it also shows how the participant has used this experience to reflect not only on what they have learnt in the art classes, but on how this incident can help them see their progress towards a 'new me', an important element in the desistance process (Bilby et al. 2013).

All the women in this study have participated in external competitions, gallery exhibitions and/or curation of artworks. They have also experienced the changing dynamics of the art room and the complexity of such. Both factors will drive the agenda for interviewing when considering this pivotal stage in the desistance process. At this stage the identity transformation potential presented by the various hooks for change needs to be distinguished conceptually from its qualities of control. While in practice these processes often coalesce, in the long run a solid replacement self may prove the stronger ally of sustained behavior change (e.g., as the individual encounters new situations outside of their control and deals with more effectively) (Giordano et al. 2002).

Stage four

The fourth type of cognitive change involves a transformation in the way the individual views the deviant behaviour or lifestyle itself. They no longer see these same behaviours as positive, viable, or even personally relevant (Giordano et al. 2002). The desistance process can be seen as relatively complete once an individual is moving through this stage. The ideology of this stage relies on the previous stages of cognitive shifts working in harmony with one another to excel the success of the process. Giordano et al. (2002) consider an ideal typical sequence to be: an overall “readiness” influences receptivity to one or more hooks for change, hooks influence the shift in identity, and identity changes gradually decrease the desirability and salience of the deviant behavior, at the same time they also inspire and direct behavior. In emphasising cognitive and identity transformations and the person’s own role in the transformation process, our perspective seems most compatible with the basic tenets of symbolic interaction.

This stage in the desistance is most poignant amongst participants in the community, upon their release and integration back into society when they are able to critically reflect on their experiences and the concept of a disassociating with a former self. However, little research has been conducted on the effects of arts-in-prisons programmes beyond the period of imprisonment, despite ever-growing scholarly interest in desistance from crime after release from custody (Cheliotis 2014). Evidencing this final stage will be more difficult than the previous three; motivation and sustainability is key to the individual’s progression towards this.

To the extent that desistance from crime is an internal process of personal reform, it is important that programmes operating in the fields of criminal justice and ‘aftercare’ create the practical and other conditions that allow participants to exclude problems with crime and law enforcement authorities from the autobiographical narratives by which they think and talk about themselves at present and in the future.

The fundamental premise at this stage is that the various cognitive transformations not only relate to one another but they also inspire and direct behaviour. Both cognitive shifts and the agentic moves that connect to them will be associated with sustained behavioural change (Giordano et al. 2002:1003).

Method

The research has been conducted at 'HMP Sale', a women's prison in England where I was employed within the education department for 3 years between 2011 and 2014. All the women involved in this study were imprisoned at the prison at various times during that period. During the initial induction period at HMP Sale women will typically select up to 10 'work areas' that they wish to attend, 90% of receptions to the sample prison in 2013 chose an arts based programme for their top 3 choices (according to HMP Sale's employment coordinator when interviewed in 2014).

HMP Sale provision

On arrival to HMP Sale women are encouraged to select a number of educational courses and work locations that they wish to attend whilst in custody, this usually consists of up to ten activities. Amongst the most popular at the prison are arts based courses provided by the education department. Between 2011 and 2014 there were a number of courses available to short and long term remand and sentenced prisoners. Women could attend a weeklong course or take up

permanent employment within the art department. Courses included fine arts, graphic design, jewellery making and textiles. At present the provision has reduced this offer to focus on a course that offers progression onto an in-house apprenticeship in the creative industries or full time positions as a classroom assistants. The art room is a substantially sized workshop that provides work and education for up to 40 women at any one time. There are 3 dedicated art and design specialists that provide tuition and supervision for the cohort.

Although art is used as a medium for recreation and re-integration back into education, it is accredited with a focus on self-employment, vocational relevance and scope for rehabilitation. Future employment or self employment in, or associated with, the creative arts and crafts can for some represent a potential pathway to life free of crime.

All the women in this study were working towards some form of qualification at some point during their time spent in the art room. Some completed low-level qualifications in sewing, arts and crafts, business enterprise and those working as classroom assistants started or completed (where early release or transfer did not impede) a level 3 preparatory teacher training course. However, much of the physical artwork that is being reviewed within this research was actually created through the undertaking of non-accredited programmes and projects that were facilitated by external agencies but did not count towards a specific qualification.

Participants

This study focuses on six women who engaged in arts based provision at HMP Sale. These women have all been selected as they have all had an interest in the arts provision; all initially attending short courses (one to two weeks in duration) within the art department and then progressing into full time permanent positions including classroom assistants, apprentices and arts production workers. One woman was interviewed whilst in prison whilst the other five were interviewed in the community following release. The focus of interviewing centres entirely on their experiences and engagement in prison arts and not their crimes or reasons for offending.

Each woman engaged in various short arts based courses leading to full time employment in the prison's art room. All six women come from different walks of life, backgrounds and areas of the UK, however they all have the same thing in common; their passion for the arts whilst in prison and thus they were all invited to form the basis of this study.

Sample Dynamics

Participant	Dates of imprisonment	Role within art room	Method of contact for interview
Kay	2012-2012 (6 months)	Classroom assistant, jewellery	Face-to-face interview in the community
Bonnie	2012-2014 (18 months)	Classroom assistant, jewellery	Face-to-face interview in the community
Susanne	2012-2012 (10 months)	Classroom assistant, art	Skype
Bettie	2012-2014 (18 months)	Classroom assistant, art and jewellery	Face-to-face interview in the community
Jacqueline	2013-2014 (10 months)	Classroom assistant, textiles	Face-to-face interview in the community
Shaye	2008-present	Arts apprentice	Face-to-face interview in prison

Figure 4: Sample Dynamics

The participant group

Kay is a British born Pakistani woman and was driven by the arts activities that she engaged in whilst in prison and was particularly interested in jewellery making.

Bonnie is a British born Indian woman in her late thirties. She arrived into custody in late 2012 heavily pregnant. Bonnie was particularly interested in jewellery

making and attended a beginner's course early on in her sentence. Susanne is a

White British woman in her late forties who was imprisoned for some months in 2012. Whilst in prison she signed up for every arts course available, as well as gardening in an attempt to fill her time with activities that she enjoyed in her

everyday life. Bettie is a White British woman in her mid forties with three daughters. Through her interests in painting and drawing she was drawn to the

prison's art department and took up full time employment there as a classroom assistant.

Jacqueline is a white British woman in her forties with two grown up daughters. She worked as a textiles assistant in the art room at HMP Sale for a relatively short period. Immediately attracted to the position of assistant and the courses on offer in the art room she contributed a wealth of skills and expertise in all aspects of textiles.

Shaye is a lifer, meaning that she is currently serving a whole life tariff of 30 years, after which time she will be eligible for parole. She is White British woman in her mid forties. Shaye has been incarcerated at HMP Sale for more 9 years, serving 5 of them in solitary confinement on a segregation unit. She spent some months working in the art department and routinely makes artwork in her cell.

Interviewing

Interviews are the most common qualitative method used in the social sciences. Research is only a more formalised and systematic way of the subtlety and complexity that we use, often as a matter of course, in everyday knowing. We need to bring some of this everyday subtlety into the research process (Holloway & Jeffereson 2000). Seidman (2013) claims that interviewing, as a research method is the best way of finding out about a person's life story, as told in their own words. Telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process. When people tell stories, they select details of their stream of consciousness. In-depth interviewing encourages people to reconstruct their experience actively within the context of their

lives (Seidman 2013). Participants should be encouraged to be frank from the outset each session, with the researcher aiming to establish a rapport in the opening moments and indicating that there are questions that will be asked (Shenton 2004:66-67).

When interviewing it is important that the researcher avoids influencing the answers respondents give (Fowler 2013:5). The participant stories-however they choose to describe them-are representative of what they want to portray and what they are comfortable and willing to volunteer as information. It is for this reason that the participant's contribution should be treated as accurate. It has been authorised by the individual and this is indeed how the researcher will gain trust on their part, presenting the narrative as told.

If a participant chooses to respond in a perceived exaggerated or misleading way-differing from my perception or based on my knowledge and experience of the individual-then it is her right to do. As the researcher it is not my place to judge, misconstrue or misrepresent as a result of this, I must accept that this is the participant's account as they have chosen to present it. Like Glassner and Miller (2011), I consider all narrative accounts to be meaningful opportunities to study and theorize the social worlds of participants, providing access to realities, in whatever form they choose to describe them. Placing responsibility on the individual to share experiences in their own words reveals powerful insight into the cultural frames people use to make sense of the world around them. Whilst interviews cannot provide the mirror reflection of the social world that some researchers look for it may provide access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds (Glassner & Miller 2011:133).

Interviewing: a feminist approach

Interviewing is a particularly valuable research method often used by feminist researchers to gain insight into the world of their participants. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) believes that interviewing plays an important role in better understanding the human condition. She attributes this to the notion that a humanistic approach to interviewing allows for in-depth explorative and candid interviews built on the relationships between researcher and participant. At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of the other people and the meaning of that experience (Seidman 2013). Being interested in a participant and valuing their story as an underpinning and integral part of the process demands that the participant be placed at the heart of the research.

This research gives a voice to an otherwise marginalised group of women effected by the criminal justice system, whether they are currently imprisoned or trying to rebuild their life back in the community. Feminist research has a tradition of demanding that the unseen and the unacknowledged be made visible and heard (Gill & Ryan-Flood 2010). Sometimes silence can be a tool of oppression: when an individual is silenced, whether by explicit force or by persuasion, it is not simply that one does not speak, but one is barred from participation in a conversation which nether-the-less involves you (Ahmed 2010). Oakley (1982) pointed out in her interviews with new mothers that her own identity as a woman played a significant role in the research encounter. 'Insider' researchers may also experience participant quandaries, especially when researching minority groups where access may be facilitated on tacit assumption that their findings will be sympathetic to the interests of the participant group (Gill & Ryan-Flood 2010:5).

When I approached some of the women in this study regarding their involvement and being subject to interview most of them seemed eager to please with three of them actually asking 'what do you want me to say?' These women are all former students and classroom assistants and relationships with them have been built up over sustained periods of time, in some cases years. With this comes a sense of mutual trust and familiarity between participant and researcher. Oakley (1997) defends the rapport between the researcher and the participant when it comes to women interviewing women. 'Rapport', a commonly used but ill-defined term, does not mean in this context what the dictionary says it does ('a sympathetic relationship') but the acceptance by the interviewee's active search to help the interviewer in providing the relevant information (Oakley 1997:35). She makes the suggestion that textbook advice to the collection of data through the use of interview is flawed in its linear and impersonal approach, dictating that the interviewer should not engage in debate or encourage counter questioning from the interviewee.

This notion that interviews are seen as having no personal meaning in social interaction tends to confine them to the statistical compatibility of other data collection methods (Oakley 1997). In this respect Oakley highlights the problem presented for feminist researchers whose primary focus is towards the validation of women's subjective experiences as women and as people, acknowledging that some level of empathy and bond should form as part of the interview process. I consider the bond between myself and the participant to be an instrumental component for the success of this research. The women are entrusting me to represent them and tell their stories in a non-judgmental way so that the recording of their experiences may be of benefit to other women affected by the criminal justice system. I position myself primarily as an 'insider', someone that is close to

the subject area and participants through professional capacity and pre-established relationships. Participants were selected based on what I knew about them and the consideration that they might benefit from being given a voice through this research.

However, I also consider myself to be the 'outsider' in some respects. This is largely due to the role that I have assumed as a researcher, inhabiting a social world differently to that of my participants. I have never experienced incarceration or the isolation of being away from loved ones, so my empathy and understanding is limited to observational and anecdotal interpretation. Feminist researchers practice reflexivity throughout the research process, keeping them mindful of their personal positioning and that of the respondent. Feminist researchers are also concerned with issues of representation of the researched (Hesse-Biber 2006:117).

Feminist interviewing involves the participant taking the lead using a few open-ended questions. Using a semi-structured interview is conducted with a specific interview guide (tailored to the research questions). The researcher still has some control then in how they would like the respondent to respond, but the researcher is still open to asking new questions throughout the interview. There is an agenda, but it is not tightly controlled and there is room left for spontaneity on the part of the researcher and interviewee (Hesse-Biber 2006:115).

The trust between the two parties lets the participant know that her responses are valued. In essence, interviews adopt a supportive and empathetic approach, allowing a woman to respond in her own way without prejudice, judgment or misinterpretation. As this whole research project revolves around the stories of the eight female participants, the findings drawn from interviews must be representational of the experiences described.

Knowing the participants

The researcher should answer questions about the nature of the project as honestly and openly as possible without creating bias in the study (Holloway & Wheeler 2010). I am familiar with the research participants on a personal level due to the close proximity we worked in throughout the duration of their sentences. Therefore, it is easy to become attached to a certain viewpoint or conclusion which may jeopardise impartialness. This study may be susceptible to responsive bias as subjects may consciously or subconsciously give a response they think myself, as the interviewer wants to hear. Again, the importance of honesty and a clear two-way communication is reinforced here to eliminate this from happening. It has been stressed to participants that the outcomes of this research are reflective of their true feelings and experiences and that this study is a forum for their personal stories.

As Holloway and Wheeler (2010) outline in their guide to qualitative research, this type of study is thought to empower participants, because they do not merely react to the questions of the researchers but have a voice and guide the study. For this reason, the people studied are generally called participants rather than subjects. It is necessary for the relationship between researcher and informant to be one of trust. This close relationship coupled with the researcher's in-depth knowledge of the informant's situation makes deceit unlikely (though not impossible).

By observing people and listening to their accounts, researchers seek to understand the process by which participants make sense of their own behaviour and the rules that govern their actions. Taking into account their informants' intentions and motives, researchers gain access to their social reality. Of course, the reports individuals give are their explanation of an actual event or action, but as the

researcher wishes to find people's own definition of reality, these reports are valid data (Holloway & Wheeler 2010:8).

According to Holloway and Wheeler (2010) some researchers that are familiar with the setting and associated literature cannot help having 'hunches' about what they may find during the data collection process. They suggest that having an open mind is crucial to the integrity of research and generating worthwhile data.

Researchers must be sensitive to the context of the research and immerse themselves in the setting and situation. Both personal and social context is important. The context of participants' lives or work affects their behaviour and therefore researchers have to realise that the participants are grounded in their history and temporality (Holloway & Wheeler 2010:5).

Gaining consent and ethical considerations

As Dua and Raworth (2012) state, special care should be taken when seeking consent from vulnerable groups such as prisoners. When conducting any part of this research in the prison I have a responsibility to adhere to safety and security policy and procedures and ensure confidentiality at all times. Similarly, information relating to the identity of the women or their offences will not be discussed within the text, nor will the name or location of the prison. All names are fictitious and the sample prison will be referred to as HMP Sale with subsequent references to further establishments being identified as HMP Fort and HMP Brent.

All research contributors were kept informed of the project's progress and were given the opportunity to amend or retract their contribution as they saw fit. The

women were kept abreast of developments and significant milestones during the project and were routinely reminded of their right to withdraw or amend their contributions as outlined and agreed in the consent form (see appendix two). The consent form gave participants a broad overview of the project's intentions, scope and outcomes, articulating how important their contribution was to the success of the research. It also acts as an agreement that as the researcher I will respect their views and right to withdraw, acting in their best interests and safeguarding them, protecting their identity.

When interviewing in prison there is a need to adhere to safeguarding and security protocol, especially when conducting the interview with Shaye at HMP Sale. These women are also vulnerable as a participant group; they have all experienced separation from loved ones as well as the loss of jobs and possessions that have had significant impact on their mental health and wellbeing. With this in mind, as a researcher with a duty of care, it was important for the women to know that that should they require it, access to professional care and support was available.

Agencies and charitable organisations such as Women in Prison offer help and support to both incarcerated women and those living back in the community in the form of counseling services, getting back into work, advice and in some instances grants for education and training. Prior to the conducting of any interview information surrounding access and referral to such services was sought. Recalling prison experiences is undoubtedly an emotional process to undertake and the handling of such and the planning involved for interviews is crucial in order to respond to participant needs in a sensitive and respectful manner.

Position as a researcher

I consider myself to be an 'insider researcher', someone who is in a position to conduct and carry out practitioner research with participants and subject matter that I am closest to. In terms of authenticity and the ability to access information sources and individuals in order to collect data and respond to research aims the insider researcher role holds great responsibility in terms of representing the participants and establishment or institution where the research is conducted. Having been a part of the organisation where the research is situated has determined the heightened level of entry and access to the prison, serving prisoners and released participants as well.

This was clearly evidenced when visiting HMP Sale as a former member of staff with full prison clearance from the Ministry of Justice in order to interview incarcerated participant Shaye. Trust was granted in terms of being able to conduct the lengthy interview in the segregation unit in a room without supervision, an eventuality that seemingly would not be possible for an outsider researcher without extensive knowledge of the working practices and security measures of the prison. Similarly, the relationships formed between the researcher and the participants are significant in terms of trust and poignancy of the insider researcher concept for positive and more informed research outcomes.

Relationships of trust had already been established with each woman prior to interviewing due to the initial relationship status as a teacher and educator, enabling them to progress through programmes of work and study. This relationship acts as the basis of open discussion about imprisonment, the specific learning and work environment (the art room), the people and interventions that actively involve myself

as the researcher in the process. In several instances the artwork that is featured in chapter four was created in response to a project that I as the teacher facilitated or certainly remember a piece(s) being created.

Interview questions

When I initially drafted out the intended interview questions I considered the use of a number of detailed questions that I rendered useful for establishing a set of predictors or themes. In reality these questions were too leading and detracted from the control that the participant should have over describing their own narrative. Hennick et al. (2011) suggests that some qualitative researchers can overlook perception and meaning in search for facts. They consider that the use of one very open question can be as valuable to the researcher as asking many when interviewing participants.

Standardised interview questions set out a clear plan for the reoccurrence of themes, however incarcerated participants will be asked slightly different questions as they cannot account for or reflect on life beyond prison. During the interview process sub questions will inevitably manifest, creating individuality and greater differentiation between participants. Holloway and Wheeler (2001) indicate that qualitative research design cannot be so prescribed or pre-determined prior to data collection since data collection brings about the generation of new phenomena, supporting and modification of existing theory. It is their understanding that researchers attempt to examine the experiences, feelings and perceptions of the people they study, rather than imposing a framework of their own that might distort the ideas of the participants. Researchers 'uncover' the meaning people give to

their experiences and the ways in which they interpret them. Although meaning should not be reduced to subjective accounts of the participants as researchers search for patterns in process and interaction of interviewing.

Scruture of interview questions

The interview questions were structured in logical and methodical sense, in order to establish shifts in identity, personality traits and reflexive abilities of a diminished and/or higher order nature. The interview schedule was revised in the early stages of the project and three drafts produced prior to a final set of questions devised that were submitted and agreed as part of the ethics clearance process. Preliminary drafts focused on the outcome of arts interventions in terms of artistic ability and skill development and were not representational of identity formation and personal development. However, this rigorous process of development of the schedule ensured that the questions eventually agreed on and formulated were indicative of the research questions and the intended project outcomes. Appendix one provides detail of the interview schedule as part of the information sheet and consent form for participants.

It was important to differentiate questions for incarcerated and released partipants, although the premise of structure, nature and intention is the same. Questions relate directly to both a natural process of desistance-need for change through to action and evidence/impact of change-and Margaret Archer's (2003) theory of reflexive identity in respect of evidencing change, progression and strides toward positive action, indicative of achieving the optimum consensus of the desistance process.

As the interview schedule progresses Giordano et al's (2002) desistance process is explored and examined through choice questioning of the participants as part of a natural progression of entry to prison to release (where appropriate). Running concurrently to the order and intention of questioning for the purposes of the methodology's rationale is the opportunity for the participant to determine a sense of self-identification and evaluation. This in turn aims to accelerate the answering of intended research questions.

Consideration and interpretation of visual artwork

In addition to anecdotal evidence, the collection and review of the women's visual artwork will also be used within this study. Selected artwork will be photographed and included alongside a critical analysis and description with the input and permission from the artist. Each participant was invited to discuss a particular piece of work they produced whilst incarcerated (see appendix one interview questions). Artwork is referred to in this thesis in terms of visual representations and interpretations by the maker and subsequently by the researcher. The artwork produced by the participants varies according to skill, interest and medium and materials used. Artefacts in the form of jewellery and textile pieces are considered and discussed alongside paintings and drawings.

Artworks are phenomena that are conceptualised in dialogue as well as in visual language, and as such dialogue is necessary to understand the relationships between artworks and their contexts (Charman & Ross 2004:42). The International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (1999) suggested that when interviewing an artist about their work, whilst good interview skills were important, a

genuine interest and acquaintance with the artist's work and professional knowledge are in most cases decisive for the quality of the information obtained. In this sense, as the facilitator/teacher of many of the art projects at the prison when the participant's created much of the artwork discussed, this vested interest and acquaintance is established.

While the impetus for interviews with artists is the artwork, so much of the job of the interviewer is about negotiating personalities, connecting with people and drawing them out, this can be achieved through discussion around the artwork (Gratton 2017, www.intheface.com). The women were given the opportunity to critically reflect on their artwork some years after its production, conjuring up emotion from a specific point in time as well as explanation and justification for its existence. Questions posed to each woman concentrated on the impact and reception of artworks made in prison, considering the thoughts and reactions from loved ones as well as wider audiences.

The logistics of interviewing

Since their release, four of the women are now living in various locations in England and Wales with one woman residing overseas. The sixth woman is currently serving a life sentence at HMP Sale. Access to visit HMP Sale was kindly and conveniently arranged with the Head of Learning and Skills and Head of Prisoner Care who had sight of all interview documentation beforehand. All interviews were recorded for the purposes of convenience and accuracy of data collection with the exception of the incarcerated participant Shaye, for whom I took comprehensive

notes and scribed her responses verbatim. Additional notes from the other interviews were also taken.

Each woman was interviewed for at least one hour. Whilst interviewing in prison, time with the participant was limited to the confines of the regime (the core day) in respect of participant Shaye having to return to her cell at a certain time. However, there was sufficient time to speak with her at length about her experiences.

Unfortunately on the day of the interview neither Shaye or the prison were able to facilitate any visual artwork being brought to the interview. With the exception of one woman residing abroad I was able to travel to each woman and arrange suitable venues to conduct interviews.

Contact with Susanne, the woman that lives outside the UK, was maintained through Skype and email correspondence. Due to the distance, it was impractical and costly for me to travel abroad to conduct a face-to-face interview; similarly phone calls are expensive. Although the interviewer can interview people that are not easy to access, one of the disadvantages of asynchronous communication such as the telephone is the reduction of social cues. The interviewer does not see the interviewee, so body language etc. cannot be used as a source of extra information. Social cues as voice and intonation are still available. Although social cues are reduced, enough social cues remain for terminating a telephone interview without a problem (Opdenakker 2006). Skype offers an economic and effective way to communicate.

Summary

It has been suggested that participation in artistic projects in general, and the process of creating artistic products in particular, can serve a transformative function for prisoners, acting as a 'catalyst' for positive psychological and attitudinal changes (Cheliotis 2014). Applying a theory of social identity contextualised alongside a model of desistance will act as a vehicle when attempting to decipher and understand the potential impact of arts engagement on the desisting women in this study.

Asking whether engagement in the arts whilst in prison can promote self-sufficiency and individuality that can support and accelerate stages of the desistance process (Cheliotis 2014). This research will need to ascertain exactly how this may be possible and if art is a contributor to the development of the needs of desisting individuals seeking to restore agency and develop an identity that supports a crime free and meaningful existence. Comparison between evolving reflexive identities and stages of a transitional model of desistance will seek to answer the research questions, in doing so establishing whether identity subgroups bare resemblance to specific stages in the desistance process.

As Cheliotis (2014) suggests, access to the arts and environment that they are facilitated in can thus provide a kind of scaffolding that makes possible the construction of significant life changes. At a basic level, one must resonate with, move toward, or select the various catalysts for change (Cheliotis 2014). Through the theoretical framework described here I will analyse how significant the arts are in supporting and promoting these life changes in order to bring about enhanced agency and positive identity formation that accelerates the desistance process.

Chapter 4: The women



Introduction

The women's stories are presented individually as case studies. Each woman has her own section and introduction and the sequencing of significant events in her 'prison story' encompass the early days of incarceration and in some instances their life prior to this eventuality. The narrative and quotations presented here in each woman's story follow the sequence of interview questions and essentially narrate the story of imprisonment and beyond.

Each woman, with the exception of Shaye, present artwork of meaning and sentiment within their story, each piece in response to a specific and poignant point in time, both joyous and painful in retrospect. Capturing significant moments in time in terms of reflection, deliberation and in some instances adoration are momentous

in the process of interpretation of the artworks from the viewpoint of the maker (the woman herself) and researcher, in addition the reader is also involved. Images of artwork are presented as outcomes of data collection and act as conduits to the individual story and how crucial this is to the integrity of the study and representing the individual. The women's identities are protected, however the featuring of their artwork created in such a private and intimate moments in their life connects to the reader and outside world in the most prolific and exposing way.

In summary to each woman's story her reflexive identity is evaluated and discussed in terms of the responses given during the interview process against the review of the artwork. The determining of which reflects the evidencing of potential shifts in identity and any significant change that has occurred, indicative of the desistance process. Each woman's story is framed in isolation here as opposed to a collective overview and presentation of findings. This individual stance represents the need to consider differing experience and individuality. This chapter presents stories in a way that the reader can become accustomed to the women's stories and personal journeys, appreciating their individualism.

Susanne



Within the art room at HMP Sale Susanne worked as a classroom assistant, specifically supporting the delivery of the fine arts course, working with a number of fellow inmates. Following her release she made contact to enquire about the location of two pieces of artwork that she had entered into competitions during her incarceration (fig 5 & fig 8). She was concerned that the pieces were lost and was disappointed that they had not been returned to her. After reconnecting Susanne with her work she agreed to take part in this research and be interviewed. Susanne has never been comfortable referring to the establishment where she was imprisoned by name, i.e. '*the prison*' or '*HMP Sale* ', instead she chooses to refer to it as 'happy valley':

Both pieces are important to me in a weird way, too much of myself went into them to leave them at happy bloody Valley [HMP Sale]. That is what being held in happy valley [HMP Sale] does to you,

you are stripped of your own power over anything and little bits of property become super important, because while you are in there as an inmate there is nothing else that you can call your own. Whilst there I had nothing, not even my own clothes or underwear, nothing of my own, all was given to me by them [the prison], no visitors, no letters, so I guess my paintings became my way of regaining some of my own power, my own energy that they couldn't take away from me. The police even had all of my personal diaries and had read them all and made mention of some of the entries in the court transcripts, it was like being violated again and again. Then there were days in the van to and from court, oh my god, to be that powerless. (Susanne)



Figure 5: *Untitled*, 2012, mixed media drawing on board, 59.4cm x 84.1cm.

Oh that's brilliant, forgot it was like that (fig 8). Thank you, it's like getting a little bit of myself back.

Obviously I'm very proud [of work produced], yet vulnerable at the same time. I didn't want to let go of my paintings as they held so much of myself, my energy in them.

(Susanne-on receipt of her artwork fig 5)

I have had very little time to continue [making artwork upon release from prison] due to work pressures and home life but the few main pieces [completed in prison and shown here] of which I am proud of and one of them has been seen by many people. I know I have to make myself make time for it [making art]. (Susanne)

Susanne discussed three pieces of artwork that she had produced in prison, she describes these pieces as having meant the most to her at the time and accurately defined her time spent there (figs 5, 7 & 8). Creating artwork had featured heavily in her efforts to remain in control and Susanne selected all the creative outlets available to her during her imprisonment.

Although Susanne had gained some previous qualifications in art and design some years ago she described how she had lost focus with any real creative practice. Whilst in prison the opportunity to engage with art again was a way of regaining an underlying focus and passion. After participating in several short courses in the art room Susanne became a part time classroom assistant and split her time between that and maintaining the prison gardens, another one of her passions:

I wanted the extra workload and the responsibility, I am a good organizer and teacher and accustomed to working with a variety of people. I wanted to spend more time in the art room. I wanted the security of not having to keep applying for work every few weeks. I worked a bit in the kitchens, drama and yoga and regularly in the gardens. (Susanne)

Coping with imprisonment

For Susanne the loss of freedom and autonomy through incarceration was overwhelming and there is an initial sense of denial of her situation in the first few days and weeks of her sentence. For someone who presents as a methodological and pragmatic individual the restraints of the prison regime were hard to overcome:

At first I was very upset, in shock also for the first few days, every time I woke up I just felt numb and could not believe where I was. I remember having to control feelings of panic at being constrained behind bars, in a small locked room. I remember looking at the barbed wire on the top of the fencing and planning my escape, fantasising about someone coming to rescue me. It felt wrong that I was there, it felt unjust, I was really angry with the Cosmos, with God. I was blaming them all for what had happened. It was a time of very mixed emotions, having to deal with so many intense situations and relationships with other inmates and staff, a really intense learning process for me.

(Susanne)

Much like some of the other women in this study Susanne actively sought to fill her time constructively in order to occupy her mind and identified that the purposeful activity would act as a coping mechanism. After initial feelings of blame, self-loathing and questioning surrounding her imprisonment Susanne was able to channel her emotions through her artwork and make sense of her situation:

The main thing driving me to concentrate on my artwork was the pain and turmoil inside of me, the hurting, the frustration of being incarcerated. I used it as a distraction from that, or as a way of releasing the pain and the feelings rather than turning them in on myself.

At times I was really in touch with myself, with my feelings, it [art] helped me to focus in the moment, to stop the obsessive mind at times. At times it was very painful because of expression of emotion. (Susanne)

The opinion of others evidently means a great deal to Susanne, she expressed that she 'felt good' when teaching staff and other women complimented her artwork or asked for her help. She also felt compelled to stand up for and represent other women who were vulnerable or were not able to act for themselves. Within her role

of classroom assistant she seemingly assumed a motherly role, especially with some of the young offenders. This gave her responsibility and put her in a position of trust when she had previously felt isolated and stripped of her identity. The role of classroom assistant gave her structure, purpose and the responsibility she desired in order to feel better about her situation and be more accepting of it. It also connected to her a former or 'inner' creative self that she had otherwise neglected or was repressed:

The responsibility of the job allowed me to feel better about myself, to feel more normal again, like a person with respect, not an inmate in a prison. It kept me occupied more, gave me more to do and keep focused on.

It [prison] reminded me of how I must make time for being creative in my life. It opened a door for me. Having the time then to paint and play guitar again made me realise how important that is and I am now a more tolerant and relaxed person. (Susanne)

She indicates that she favoured group work and collaborative arts projects, enjoying taking the lead:

I was very encouraged and felt good about myself from the reaction of fellow inmates to my artwork and skills. I received a lot of guidance and supervision and technical advice from my tutor and when necessary from the other tutor in the art room. (Susanne)

It was this encouragement that persuaded Susanne to enter her work into external competitions and exhibitions. Having a sense of pride in her artwork allowed her to show it to the general public whom at that time she then felt isolated from. On one occasion she was happy to use her real first name when exhibiting at a gallery, connecting her to the criminal justice system that she so desperately wanted to disassociate from. In 2012 Susanne's piece 'Masterpieces' (figs 6 & 7) was included as part of an exhibition organised by the Women's Support Centre in Surrey, a charity for women effected by the criminal Justice Sector.

The piece received great acclaim and Susanne was elated by the response from

the viewing public. This restored her faith somewhat in public opinion of an otherwise misunderstood and misrepresented element of the criminal justice system. Susanne said that she had felt proud that she had shared her work with others in this way:

It was a confidence building experience to have my work shown, I felt proud of myself. (Susanne)



Figure 6: *Masterpieces* framed and hanging in gallery, 2012.



Figure 7: *Masterpieces*, 2012, charcoal and watercolour on paper, 59.4cm x84.1cm.

This is a collage of those masterpieces that inspire me. It has been a real test piece for me using a mix of charcoal, chalk and watercolour and learning more as the picture continued. In the past few weeks I have enjoyed pushing myself and being pushed to expand my artwork both in technique and composition.

(Susanne 2012, excerpt from exhibition literature, the Lightbox Gallery)

Creative freedom

Susanne was impressed with the facilities available to her in the art room and as an assistant she was given access to materials and cupboards and was permitted to take items back to her cell. She was able to assert individuality and control over her surroundings within the art room. The sheer size of the room and the fact that there were no imposing bars or restrictions on where you could work supported Susanne during her adjustment period. When reflecting on her time spent in the art room Susanne uses the word 'freedom' several times as opposed to her initial feelings of prison and being helpless over the loss of control:

I had freedom to walk around the art room.
I was given a lot of creative freedom within my classes, both within given projects and my own creations.

My time in the Art room became a very important thing for me to do whilst I was there, as did having the freedom to create pieces whilst in my room.

Overall the experience [prison] made me much stronger in myself. The whole process helped me to think more clearly, develop stronger boundaries and have more confidence in myself, even though the illness [referring to an underlying condition] itself at times made me act emotionally unstable. Working then [in prison] allowed me to see more clearly how I am with other people, although at that time I had an undiagnosed and untreated hyperthyroid gland which caused me to over-react to situations, to be anxious and stressed out very easily even get angry. But still I learnt to deal with others in a more accepting way. It was hard to be half way [as a classroom assistant at HMP Sale], not a teacher yet not part of the class when some people were stealing things under my eyes and also being destructive. I had to let go of a lot of my own judgemental mind. I am more tolerant. (Susanne)

Artwork

Suanne created a number of pieces of artwork whilst at HMP Sale. In particular she chose to discuss one piece painted in response to a tragic event that occurred during her imprisonment. The piece 'Surrender' encompasses Susanne's time at HMP Sale and her articulate response to its meaning and purpose speaks volumes in terms of her experiences and the turmoil she felt at the time. This is in addition to the feelings it continues to evoke.



Figure 8: *Surrender*, 2012 acrylic on paper, 59.4 x 84.1cm.

I painted this (fig 8) in the art classroom during my work time at happy valley [HMP Sale] the morning after I lost my entire home to wild fire. It symbolises my time at happy valley most accurately, it focuses on one event but it reflects the main theme of my whole time there. I was feeling devastated, lost, angry, very alone and powerless, almost at the edge of my sanity. I felt that I had to use every piece of willpower to stop myself from going mad on the morning that I painted this piece. I had just heard the night before by way of a very quick telephone call that I had lost my home and all belongings and dogs and cats to a wild fire in the area where I

lived at the time. My son also nearly lost his life. There was nothing I could do to help him. It was one of the worst times of my life. But it also reflected the whole experience for me of being incarcerated.

I felt helplessness to a power greater than myself which felt out of control, in that particular case it was the fire and the inability to do anything to help or even arrange for help, no way to communicate until the following weekend etc etc. But in general throughout my stay at happy valley the humiliation of being controlled by others, the inability to communicate with my son except for letters and one short phone call each weekend for which I had to spend the whole of my wages on for only ten minutes. The inability to have the healthy food and natural supplements I normally take daily, instead relying on institution food. Just everything taken away and anything given was given conditionally.

I guess that I had to surrender, to accept that not everything in my life is under my control. So this piece of Artwork really gave expression to all of that. For me this is one of the main reasons the art room became a haven for me. It was one place where I felt respected, that my opinion was worth something, and a place where I had a certain amount of control over what happened to me whilst there. (Susanne)

Susanne consolidated her composition when using pastel to describe vibrant gesture and texture directly taken from her thoughts and feelings at the time of imprisonment. The artwork she has chosen to contribute to this study articulates this perfectly without the use of words. In the absence of being able to confide in a loved one regarding her emotional wellbeing and apprehensions surrounding the environment Susanne used the medium of abstract and expressive art to capture a dark moment, turning it into something positive. The 'quickness' in which she created work is captured in the work (figs 9-13). The fact that the work is still able to produce and reinforce feelings of anguish and helplessness that plagued Susanne is a powerful indicator of the work's intended purpose and design. The reason that she keeps hold of such pieces without display or showcase is an even more powerful assertion that the prison could not detain her memories and possessions that supported her through such an emotional time. They also act as a sobering reminder and deterrent to a period that she does not wish to repeat.

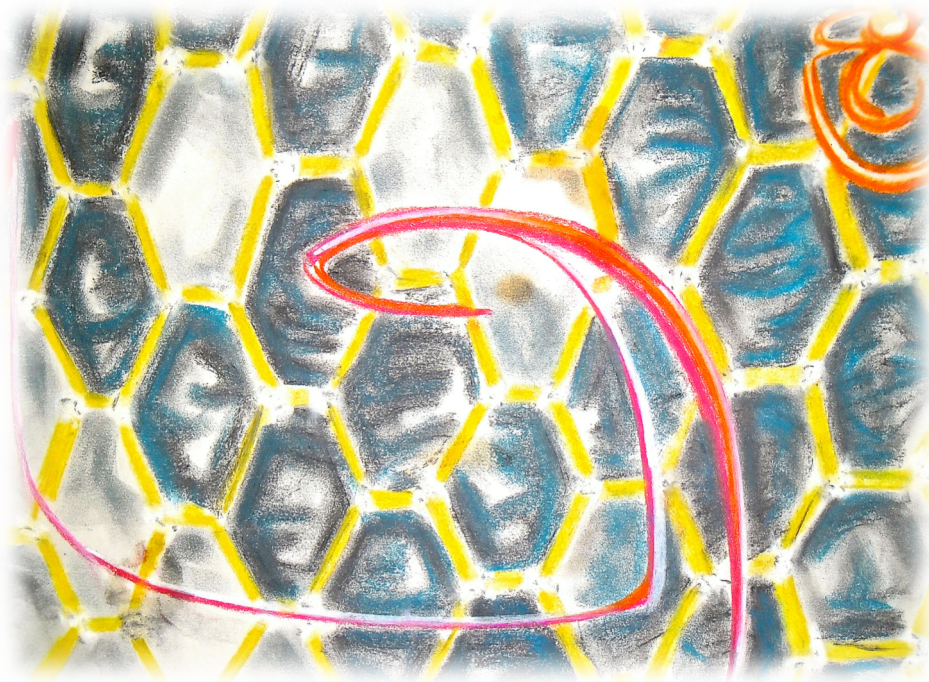


Figure 9: *Untitled*, abstract impression in soft pastel, 29.7 x 42.0cm, 2012.



Figure 10: *Untitled*, animals/fire in pastel and acrylic paint, 29.7 x 42.0cm, 2012.



Figure 11: *Untitled*, abstract impression in soft pastel and water colour, 42.0 x 59.4cm, 2012.



Figure 12: *Untitled*, abstract impression in oil pastel, 42.0 x 59.4cm, 2012.



Figure 13: *Homage to Chagall*, abstract impression in mixed media-pastel, charcoal and acrylic paint, 42.0 x 59.4cm, 2012.

Reflexive identity of Susanne

Susanne initially presented identity traits consistent with that of communicative reflexivity when reflecting on her prison experience. To some extent she still identifies with this sub-group, exercising greater levels of tolerance through reflective practice can often require the guidance and in some respects the approval of others. Susanne does not approve of the stigma attached with prison when considering her own experiences and as a result she dissociated herself with the experience and limited what she was to share with her friends and family whilst she was a serving prisoner. Similarly, a mistrust in the 'system' (criminal justice system)-especially where the handling and ownership of her artwork had been concerned-suggests that as being a communicative reflexive, she often engaged in what Archer (2003) defined as 'thought and talk'. In other words, Susanne often sought the opinion, justification and approval from others in order to take action. In this particular respect Susanne uses the production of her artwork and the acclaim she would receive from it as a way of restoring a sense of being and self respect lost owing to her imprisonment.

Susanne was imprisoned in England whilst her permanent residence was outside of the UK. She was a significant distance from her son for a period without visitation and this demanded a way of remaining in contact through other means. Archer (2003) characterises the impact of the reflexive imperative of the communicative reflexive sub-group as being the deliberation of the practical means of staying close to 'interlocutors' (loved ones) during periods of separation. For communicative reflexives-whose interlocutors may live over hundreds of miles away-the desire to maintain these relationships resulting in minimal discomfort and embarrassment to the loved one(s) is essential.

Susanne's relationship with her son is most poignant and decisive in determining her reflexive identity. The desire to make him proud and protect is paramount throughout her prison journey, evidenced through her responses during interview and indicative of the way she now lives her life back in the community. Archer observes this notion as being a manifest lack of enthusiasm, blending personal uncertainty and sometimes apprehension with a countervailing desire to make a loved one(s) proud of them (Archer 2012:130). Susanne also took solace from what she could she could receive in the way of praise in response to her artwork and indeed her work ethic as a serving prisoner.

As a private and relatively guarded individual Susanne has little to nothing to do with any woman incarcerated at HMP Sale since her release, unlike some of the other women in the study. Not mentioning the name of the establishment situates it firmly in the past. A self commitment not to be defined by her incarceration is generated by the involvement of others in her life and perception. Although not entirely defined by one reflexive identity Susanne remains independent from the prison experience which suggests a move towards a more autonomous thought process.

Since her release Susanne has looked to spirituality, forgiveness and acceptance to a certain extent that has allowed her to resume a purposeful existence. Albeit, without its challenges and hurdles, life in the community as a free person has prompted a consolidation of mindfulness which has allowed for an undercurrent of resilience and tolerance to prevail for the greater good. Thus leading Susanne towards experiences of greater capacity for autonomous thought, resulting in a shift towards the characterisation of an autonomous reflexive.

Shaye



Interviewing in prison

As I outlined in the method section in chapter three, Shaye is a lifer (a prisoner sentenced to life imprisonment or an indeterminate sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) with no automatic right to be released) currently serving a whole life tariff (a period set for 30 years before the opportunity to apply for parole). Shaye is categorised as a 'restricted status' prisoner or RS. An RS prisoner is any female or young person convicted or on remand, whose escape would present a serious risk to the public and who is required to be held in designated secure accommodation (Robinson 2013:20). Shaye worked in the art room at HMP Sale for a period of eighteen months and produced a number of artworks for exhibitions and competitions, since her incarceration she has also produced many pieces of fine art and craft items in her cell.

Shaye received support on a one-to-one basis over a period of six months and I came to know her quite well in my capacity as an art tutor at HMP Sale . In 2014 Shaye was made aware of this research project and she expressed an interest in becoming a participant. Having gained permission to conduct research from the Prison's director and obtaining ethics clearance a letter was sent to Shaye and the Head of Residence at HMP Sale requesting to make arrangements for an interview. Both parties were extremely accommodating and a visit was facilitated with Shaye in early 2016.

Shaye's interview took place in the prison's segregation unit, a secure unit for women with complex needs. Women housed here are often considered to be of risk to themselves, others or both. They will therefore not generally mix with the rest of the prison population. This can be a short-term solution to an incident(s) of poor behaviour, act of violence or self harm and in other instances it can be a long-term arrangement. The unit's staff work with women to improve their attitudes and behaviour and take necessary steps to support their re-integration back to the main housing block.

Although Shaye was incarcerated on this unit on and off for nine years (5 years continuously at one stage) at the time of interviewing she had been fully relocated to the main housing block with the rest of the prison population. Due to her RS there were limited places where she could work around the prison. She was unable to work with tools, excluding her from work in locations such as the kitchens or gardens and she was not permitted to associate with certain prisoners. As a result she was given the job of painting the walls in the segregation unit where she could remain under constant supervision. Therefore, the interview took place on the unit under these conditions.

Shaye was interviewed in the day room (a room where women housed on the unit could paint or read outside of their cell) with the door open. As an ex-employee with full prison clearance the interview was able to take place without the need for prison officer supervision. Knowing the staff on the unit and the Head of Residence on a professional level meant that time with spent with Shaye was maximized and trust was given when conducting the interview. The interview itself lasted over two hours without disruption by the staff; occasionally a prison officer would come in to enquire if everything was okay.

Access to the arts

Shaye explained the circumstances leading to her removal from the art room, a decision taken by the prison's security department in 2015. Previously in 2013, members of the panel for good order and discipline (GOAD, a weekly board of professionals and prison staff that discuss prisoner behaviour, progress and sanctions) decided that Shaye's progression deemed her suitable to attend education on a part time basis accompanied by a prison officer. She began working in the art room thereafter, quickly building up rapport and trust among department staff and some of the other women that worked there. Shaye attended on a part time basis initially and after some weeks and sustained positive behaviour was able to attend full time. She learnt how to make jewellery to order and coordinated the sale of cards and gift items to other women. Eventually Shaye was able to attend the art room without the need for an escort (a prison officer) and became a classroom assistant under the direction of the art tutors.

Shaye had been working as an assistant in the art room for eighteen months when she was removed after the submission of a significant information report (SIR) by a staff member. She maintains that the information was the false accusations of another prisoner. Before her tenure as a classroom assistant in the art room Shaye had spent several years attempting to gain employment there, however members of the good order and discipline board (GOAD) decided against allocating her several times for security reasons. During her time spent in segregation Shaye had been in trouble by her own admission on a number of occasions. This had included violence towards staff and at one stage her cell was not to be opened without the presence of six officers. As an RS prisoner Shaye is required to be escorted by a prison officer at all times when she moves around the prison.

Since leaving the segregation unit Shaye says that she has been inhibited in terms of her access to the arts, acquiring arts materials and being allowed to keep artwork in her cell. During long periods in the segregation unit Shaye was without work, educational course or activity that the majority of other prisoners attended. This resulted in her rarely leaving the unit, her cell and heavily restricted the association with other prisoners. Often spending several hours locked up each day Shaye was granted access to art materials in order to draw, paint and construct small-scale sculptures in her cell. When asked if being in solitary confinement allowed her greater access to art materials and the ability to pursue creative outlets-albeit in the confines of her cell with limited guidance or tuition-Shaye answered yes. Living on the main houseblock was restrictive, especially since she was removed from the art room:

I get my cell spun (searched) every week almost. One day I was at work the next thing I know I was taken out to be strip-searched and had my cell spun. They said that a report had been put in from social [partial name of art room/workshop] saying that I was going

to take a paintbrush, sharpen it and stab [says staff members name]. Then I lost my job and I didn't go back again. (Shaye)

Since being suspended from the art room Shaye says that she is desperate to go back but feels it is unlikely that this will happen due to clashes with staff. She spoke about not feeling 'liked' or supported by a male tutor who she feels- along with other prisoners-wanted to remove her from the art room:

I'd go back tomorrow, but [says art tutor's name] won't have me back there. Not as long as he's there. It's all a mess up there. (Shaye)

Comparing what she currently possesses in terms of artwork and materials in her cell Shaye says that she is only allowed one small canvas that is on her wall and that her materials are constantly being confiscated. Much of the work she has produced and accumulated over the past ten years has been placed into a stored property area within the prison, including many large-scale items. As prisoners are only permitted to keep a limited number of items in their cells they can keep additional items in stored property and request an item(s) be swapped for another, e.g. a CD, clothing item etc. Shaye's senior officer informed her that she had too many paintings and other craft items in her cell and she attributes this to the regular searching of her cell, known commonly in prison as 'cell spinning'. Shaye says that this happens frequently and sometimes includes a personal or strip search of her person.

On several occasions during the interview Shaye commented that she would 'go back tomorrow' [to work in the art room] and there was a distinct sadness in her voice when discussing her removal. She explained that she would often have to borrow art materials from a friend who worked in the art room in order to engage in any form of creativity:

I borrowed some paper and paints and things from [says women's name] and [says prison officer's name] is standing in my door saying 'right I'm searching your room', I said 'why? Tell me what you're looking for' and she [the prison officer] says 'you don't need to know'. She takes all [says friend's name] stuff and I said 'that's not mine, you can't take it'. And this happens every week. (Shaye)

This lack of access to art materials has not prevented Shaye from crafting in her cell though; she goes onto explain how she improvises with very little tools and materials:

I make animals out of books. I fold the pages from old books and make things, ornaments. I make hedgehogs out of the pages. (Shaye)

When considering the impact of these sanctions and reduced access to the arts and at least arts materials Shaye has reflected back on a time when she was able to practice art as part of her day-to-day life within prison. Losing her job, having limited access to previous artworks and very few materials has clearly had a negative impact on Shaye and how she functions in prison, especially as she has enjoyed greater access in the past. She discusses how some staff-in her opinion-have not only prevented her from accessing arts materials but from exhibiting her work also:

They [the prison staff] put a display board up on houseblock four [Shaye's dwelling], hope board. Girls to put up their pictures and poems. I gave a poem and two drawings to officer and she didn't put it up. I asked her [the prison officer] 'why didn't you put my things up?' She said that it had to be original work. She didn't believe it were my work, I said 'why don't you think it's my work?' She said she didn't think that it was my work 'cause it weren't original. (Shaye)

The hope board was intended as a place for women to submit work that they could share with others on the houseblock. Shaye's comments on the questioning by a staff member about the authenticity of her work shocked her and she spoke about feeling disappointed and singled out. Questioning in this way defeated the objective of the board and its symbolism as a means of expression for women. Shaye also spoke about the poetry she writes and enters into competitions. Most recently she

entered a piece that was published in a women's mental health magazine. She also enters work into the annual Koestler awards and continues to win cash prizes for her entries.

Artwork

Shaye was most content in the art room when she was left to produce large-scale work, usually in the form of a commission from the prison. She created a number of paintings for the refurbishment of the staff canteen but had never been able to view it once exhibited. When asked how this had made her feel she said that her ability to replicate work and work relatively quickly had meant that she did not get emotionally attached to work that she could not keep. She was happy that she had been considered to undertake such work and that others would see her artwork beyond the confines of the art room.

Shaye's inspirations mostly come from her imagination, what she can see through her cell window and the ideas that others provide for her when she completes a commissioned piece of work:

They just come to me. In the seg [segregation unit] I'd just look outside the window sometimes and things would come to me. Buildings, industrial scenes, wildlife, all kinds of things. I like buildings and houses. I've got a very vivid imagination. (Shaye)

Prior to arranging the interview with Shaye I had asked her to bring a piece of artwork to the interview but unfortunately this was not possible as she was not permitted to bring anything to the segregation unit. I asked Shaye if she would like to consider a piece that was of importance or significance to her and discuss it. She wanted to talk about a sculptural piece that she made for the 2015 Koestler Awards.

The piece was called Blood Mountain and it was created in response to the Awards theme that year of 'journey'.

It were made out of paper mache. It were huge. It had all these cards going round it like a board game that you could play. There were a volcano, it was originally a mountain and then it had a river of blood flowing round it, like a volcano. As soon as we were given the project theme and I heard 'journey' I just thought of this mountain in Greece. It came straight to me. This mountain, it were beautiful, you should go. I went there about 14 years ago, it were so beautiful, you opened the door in the hotel room and this mountain were in front of you. (Shaye)

The piece evoked memories that Shaye had forgotten from a holiday in Greece several years ago. From this memory and the idea of creating a sculpture came a piece of artwork that would symbolize her life since that point on. Shaye describes the mountain as being symbolic of a volcano flowing with blood from a river down to a valley, incorporating a road and a river with a bridge over it. Under the bridge there is a prison van that has crashed. When discussing the piece Shaye laughed about the crashed van and said that it was just 'in her head at the time to do that', it was not something that she had witnessed or had necessarily wanted to happen.

Early on in the construction of the artwork Shaye decided that she was going to produce a participatory piece for the viewer. Using the concept of a board game Shaye produced playing cards in order for the viewer to make their way around the mountain. She used life events and experiences as markers articulating pivotal moments that have shaped her personality and subsequently led her where she is today.

There's things I've done which have lead me down one path or another. Lead me here [prison]. The bridge is about crossing one path to another. (Shaye)

Whilst the piece is quite disturbing in the context of rivers of blood and a crashed prison van, it is participatory. Shaye actively invites others to view it, engage with it and touch it, taking the piece into different dimensions of viewer understanding and

interpretation. The piece can aesthetically present negativity, violence or anti-establishment interpretations, however when discussing it there is a sense of hope and happy memories from Shaye. The piece is very honest, Shaye has used it to share her life, and both positive and negative experiences and it has brought up a lot of emotion and nostalgia for her.

Shaye was fully engaged in the making of this piece and looked forward to returning to the art room daily so that she could continue work on it. Her peers would often stand around and watch her work on it, watching it progress daily. Even the art tutor that she suggests dislikes her commended her work. It took all her concentration and she did very little else in the art room during that period, speaking to many people about it whilst she was making it.

I worked solidly on it [the sculpture] for three weeks for five hours a day, other girls came up and said it were good and gave some advice. Even [says male art tutor's name] thought it were good.
(Shaye)

As the piece that Shaye described had been entered into the 2015 Koestler Awards it was not in her possession nor had it been returned to the prison yet. Upon writing to the art department at HMP Sale to enquire about the location of the work they informed me that the Blood mountain piece had not been returned to them. After writing to the Koestler Trust directly they informed me that the piece had since been disposed of:

Hi there,

I am currently completing a doctorate in education concerning arts engagement with groups of female offenders and ex-offenders. Between 2011-2014 I was employed as an art teacher at HMP Sale and worked extensively with present inmate Shaye.

Earlier on in the year I interviewed Shaye at HMP Sale as part of my research, during the interview she spoke about a piece of work that she entered into the 2015 awards, a large sculpture resembling a mountain/volcano simulating a board game, she thinks she named it

'Blood Mountain' but wasn't entirely sure. There don't appear to be any photos of the piece taken whilst it was being made/still at HMP Sale and having spoken to the current art teacher at the seminar at the South Bank recently and the piece hasn't been returned to the prison (Shaye is a lifer and the piece would not have been sent to a relative).

Are you able to tell me whether the piece has been returned to the prison, are there any photos? I have a consent form signed by Shaye to use her work in my research and be interviewed, I also have consent from prison to conduct research there, I would very much like to include visual imagery of Shaye's piece that she has discussed with me. Any help is greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance
Sophie Nickeas

Dear Sophie,

I have looked into this further and I can see that the entrant kindly donated her artwork to the Koestler Trust last year, therefore it was not returned to the prison.

Unfortunately after some time we were unable to sell the artwork, and as you may know we work in very small building with very limited storage space; therefore I am very sorry to say that this particular artwork has been deaccessioned and disposed of. I am very sorry for any inconvenience and disappointment caused.

If I can assist you further in any way please let me know. Again please accept my sincere apologies.

All the best,
Arts Administrator
The Koestler Trust

When Shaye was contacted and informed of the response from the Koestler Trust she wrote a letter back expressing her emotions of anger and disappointment (fig 15) at the decision taken to destroy the piece.

H.M.P.

Dear Sophie,

Thankyou for getting in touch with me about my artwork, my piece for the Koestler Awards called 'Blood Mountain' came as a great shock to me that it had been destroyed. It took me at least 4 months to do this piece as it was all made out of pape-mashe + on quite a large scale as I incorporated it as a game.

When I completed the form for it to go to Koestler I did highlight the fact that if it did not sell to return it. I am really upset and angry that a piece of work that took so long has been destroyed.

I did do another piece for a competition and the Theme was 'Heroes and Villains' again I did this in pape-mashe and did an Ice-age Scene with 2 14inch Sculptures of 1 female Hero and 1 female Villain.

Once completed it was placed on the side in Arts + Crafts to be taken to this competition but I was horrified to find that [] had just thrown it under the side with boxes and paper thrown on top of it.

[] destroyed all my artwork which is unforgivable so unfortunately I have nothing for you to photograph. The 2 pieces I did in pape-mashe would have been ideal but unfortunately to my dismay they've been destroyed.

I do however have one piece of work

which is in my Bulk property which I did for
 Koester, this piece I did on a large board, I
 painted this and it was the Anniversary of
 World War II So my Theme for this piece
 was to paint a Silhouette of a lone Soldier
 at the Side of his daughters grave, a
 Sunset in the background and I wrote a
 poem and ghosted this over the picture.
 This would make a good photograph
 for you, when I sent this piece to Koester
 I stated not for sale and that I wanted
 it returned.
 So this is the only piece I have
 left but like I said it would make a
 beautiful photograph.
 Yours faithfully
 [Signature]

Figure 14: Letter from Shaye

Reflexive identity of Shaye

'Not everyone can practice one of these three reflexive responses (communicative, autonomous, meta) towards the 'logic of opportunity', all of which seek to match life outcomes to subjects' life concerns'

(Archer 2012: 249)

At the time of interviewing and correspondence from her since suggests that that
 Shaye presents as and lives her life out in prison as a fractured reflexive. Her
 constant attempts to assert agency, gain it as a conscious autonomous event or
 seek the guidance of others to fulfill a certain sense of purpose have been all but
 exhausted. The sense of helplessness that engulfs her very being is evident from
 her responses of apathy for the prison regime and its staff referring to herself as a

'guinea pig' for prison interventions that she feels have no bearing on her progression. Powerless to influence the decision of those managing her sentence she reluctantly attends whatever programme or intervention is available to her as she has no choice.

Shaye is not completely helpless and still has a strong sense of will and opinion in many respects, the resilience/resistance that she comes up against from the structural imposition she is governed by ensues power over her. It is by this notion that her reflexive identity-at present-is determined by. In other words the prison regime-more specifically her regime-dictates what she does and how she will do it to a greater extent than the rest of the prison population (in HMP Sale). There are far greater restrictions on her compared to that of the other five women in the study. Fully aware of this and the repercussions of such upon her very being, she has succumbed to this fate in many respects. Whilst she does not readily accept this there is acknowledgement on her part that she may not be able to influence it or change it.

It is for these reasons that a familiarity with a fractured identity is present as she is unable to navigate her way to a more autonomous existence synonymous with a time before prison. Archer (2012) suggests that individuals can become 'displaced' by contingent occurrences and could potentially return to their earlier mode of reflexivity if circumstances became more favourable, provided that their relations supported their return (290).

Due to her categorisation as a restricted status prisoner her options and movements within HMP Sale are extremely limited. The structural implications of

such render her agency assertion to be limited at best. Ideally Shaye would like to go back to the art room, however she accepts that this is unlikely. Having been shut down at each avenue that she has tried to explore as a means of establishing a workable existence for her life sentence her decision-making has ceased to be her own. A false persona reminiscent of a fractured reflexive has been created as a byproduct of her depravity.

Archer (2003, 2012) theorises that the point is not that these people are somehow unable to function; instead the fractured nature of their reflexivity makes 'functioning' difficult. In this instance the prison creates a barrier that leads to inefficiency and inaction albeit to the knowledge of Shaye herself.

Kay



Kay is a British born Pakistani woman in her mid forties who served a short sentence at HMP Sale and was released in 2012. I had interviewed Kay previously- whilst she was incarcerated-for a separate study which I undertook in 2013, evaluating the validity of social enterprise ventures and accredited arts programmes in prison. As a result-and due to the established relationship between myself and Kay as a classroom assistant-she agreed to be a part of this research and to be interviewed outside of prison. I met with Kay in a restaurant in late 2015 and she discussed what she had done since leaving HMP Sale.

Kay described her initial thoughts of prison:

Scary...confused, isolated. Yeah, just lonely.
Oh my god what am I doing here? (Kay)

Kay was imprisoned for a short time at another female establishment prior to her transfer to HMP Sale , (referred to here as HMP Fort) and it was her first experience of being in custody. She spoke about the stark contrast in the two prisons and how HMP Sale was preferable.

It was the absolute pits [HMP Fort], including the staff. The staff were like robots, no interaction just opening and closing doors. At [HMP Sale] conditions were better, more updated, even the staff were better. Time feels like forever, in [HMP Fort] there was a high population of prisoners and very little for them to do. Education was on a first come first served basis. You had to line up, if you got in you got in, if you didn't you would have to go back. (Kay)

Kay was impressed by the facilities on offer at HMP Sale , specifically in the art room:

My first impressions were like wow. Compared to what I'd seen in [HMP Fort], it was clean and fresh, lots available, there was lots to do. It was definitely miles better to what they had in [HMP Fort]. I was one of the lucky ones that got put on straight away [on an arts based course]. (Kay)

Kay had not participated in much arts activity before prison. Her experience had been limited to supporting her children with creative school projects and homework. She had engaged in some form of dress design during her early twenties with her cousin who made the garments as a way of making relatively cheap clothes. Kay described herself as having an eye for design and this interest that had lay dormant for several years was reasoning for her activity choices when incarcerated. Work and family commitments had not allowed her to pursue creative pastimes that she knew would engage her, in prison she selected all six of the arts courses on offer during induction when required to select ten work and education locations. Her motivation was to use her time effectively and use creative activity as a way of coping with her imprisonment:

Obviously my top ones [activity choices] were the art room.
Keeping my mind occupied, doing something creative-because I

find myself to be quite a creative person-consume my time and hopefully time will just go you know? The main thing was just doing something in prison that I actually enjoyed doing. Sometimes people express themselves through art and through the things that they are doing, that's one of the main reasons I chose card making, jewellery making and so on. I think for me personally your department [art room] was the lifesaver. That's what kept me going. I don't think I would have coped with just being locked in my room all day with nothing to do. You know that was really good (jewellery making class), I really enjoyed that. (Kay)

Keeping busy and making what she considered to be 'good use' of her time was of the utmost importance to Kay and she considers her arts participation in a very literal and recreational sense. The desire to engage in activity that was enjoyable, a distraction and welcome shift from the mundane nature of imprisonment is definitive in Kay's prison story. Her role within the art room was one of responsibility as well as creative outlet. The freedom she craved in terms of access to creative activity, materials and the ownership concerned with making could be found in her classroom assistant role:

For me being an assistant, at the time when evening came, I had my shower, got into bed and watched a bit of TV, normally about eight o'clock I was just out. You had such a full day, backwards and forwards with the two sessions a day. I think for me personally your department [art room] was the lifesaver. That's what kept me going. I don't think I would have coped with just being locked in my room all day with nothing to do. (Kay)

This is such a profound and prolific statement to suggest that the nature of the provision offered to Kay. This is considered in terms of the environment and opportunity that fulfilled her most basic of needs, to actually survive her ordeal psychologically and be able to take many positives from the experience. There is also the suggestion here that the exhaustion from a day's work in the art room supported the notion that 'filling time' in order to keep busy would undoubtedly help the time go faster. In this respect Kay was seen to be fully immersed in her role and creative activity.

Life after release

Kay has spent much time reflecting on her prison experiences, thinking about the destination and fate of others and regularly shows empathy for those less fortunate. There is frustration around how these women are represented by the 'system' (criminal justice system). Considering publicity and media coverage surrounding women's imprisonment since her release Kay is of the mindset that the general public is unaware of the true extent of how incarceration affects the imprisoned woman and admits she struggles with this concept.

It's like to me someone saying I've watched that programme about Inside HMP Fort, I said you still don't get inside HMP Fort. You don't, it's not the same. (Kay)

Feeling that few people could understand her plight and the experiences that she encountered during her time in prison she became something of a self confessed recluse upon her release from HMP Sale.

I mean in all honesty when I first went home I isolated myself, I just didn't wanna be around people, I just concentrated on and spent time with my daughter 'cause she was my main concern. I just sort of like thought yeah I'm gonna take my time, so when people were trying to come and get me out. At first, 'cause I got out on December 3rd 2012 and I remember and obviously January the 18th was my birthday and they'd [friends/family] apparently planned me a party and thankfully the gods were on my side 'cause we got snowed in so we couldn't go. So I was grateful 'cause obviously on that day they had to tell me 'we'd actually planned a surprise birth[day]...and I'd thought thank god, thank god, I really didn't want that. I didn't want to socialise, I actually wanted to just stay at home and just take it in my stride. (Kay)

Kay was concerned by some of the reactions she received following her release also, believing that she was being judged by others. It was for this reason that she did not wish to discuss her experiences with many, including members of her own family. Her priority was to put the experience behind her.

I just wanted to stay at home, I didn't want to go out, didn't want to mix with nobody, just wanted to be at home you know? I think the worse thing for me was like when I first did sort of go out and see certain people I noticed some people, at like an actual social event and they were a

group of people in the corner. Well the thing was they were like talking and sort of like under their breath, 'oh yeah she's just come out of jail' and I was just like 'come on, this is like 2013/14, what you going on with?' (Kay)

Since leaving prison Kay has continued her passion for jewellery making and has started to incorporate beading techniques with customized clothing and accessories. She has made a number of embellished collars and handbags and has worn them out, receiving praise and compliments for her work. Kay displays pride in not only the fact that she can produce these items herself to a high standard but that she has taken away a skill from her time spent in prison, taking pleasure from engaging in.

I looked in this bag, 'cause I made this bag in HMP Fort [laughs] covered in embroidery and has these satchel straps, it's massive. That's full of all from bits from jewellery making.

Now with the jewellery making I've incorporated dressmaking. Using the same sort of thing with the beading (form of jewellery design taught at HMP Sale), adding gems and stuff to embellish my clothes. So that's been really good. People sort of say to me 'how can you do it, it takes so much time?' But it really doesn't because I've learnt to do it really quickly. (Kay)

Kay was disappointed that some of the work she produced in prison was not returned to her after she left prison. She entered several competitions and completed several low-level qualifications but did not receive any certification and felt unhappy about this:

I didn't get my certificates, 'cause jewellery making I really did expect to get that one, 'cause they was myself and another young lady called Sharma that did the course together and we did cooking together on Eid day, she had really long hair, pretty girl, really pretty. Asian girl as well, she and I... 'cause we were gonna prepare food for Eid and they told us that we had to go and do our catering course and I did the level 1 and 2 and I actually got, on that particular one I got 99%, a 99% pass and that, so I was actually quite proud of that and I was like 'I want my certificates!' [laughs]. (Kay)

Artwork

All of the jewellery and beaded items that Kay made in prison she has kept and takes pride in showing them to people, although admittedly she has only revealed to close friends exactly where they were made and how she developed the skill.

I've kept all of the stuff I've made. I've still got everything. I've got absolutely everything. I made this bag in [HMP Fort] and it's full of stuff from jewellery making. Every now and again when friends come over I take this bag out and show them and they're totally impressed. They can't believe how these things are made. I've got all of them, every single piece I've ever made. And some of the bits I still wear. (Kay)



Figure 16: Gold tassel bracelet and necklace set, 2012.



(Left) Figure 16: Beaded pearl and green tassel necklace, 2012.

(Right) Figure 17: Gold/pearl cross chain bracelet and necklace set, 2012.



(Left) Figure 18: Beaded pearl cross chain/tassel necklace and bracelet set, 2012.

(Right) Figure 19: Brown/gold cross chain bracelet and necklace set, 2012.



Figure 20: Heart pendant and bracelet set, 2012.

(Below) Figure 21: variation of a twist bracelet and necklace set, 2012.



Even though Kay has been reserved in what she has chosen to disclose to those closest to her regarding her prison experience she still holds all the items she made dear. When she spoke about exactly what she had made there was a genuine sense of pride. A fondness emerged whilst recalling a time when she was able to

sit, concentrate and make pieces of jewellery, experimenting with technique and learning new things. Figure 21 demonstrates Kay's uniqueness at her flair for jewellery design, personalisation and expression. Whilst other women in the art room were following patterns Kay was spending time in her cell designing bespoke pieces and experimenting. This creative freedom re-installed a halted passion for design and creativity that had subsided when work and family commitments took over.

Storing all of the items that she made in HMP Sale in a bag she had handmade in HMP Fort, Kay periodically views its contents and has shown them to friends:

Every now and then when friends come to visit I take this bag out and they're totally impressed they can't believe how these things are made and yes I can...I've got everything. I can actually line them up and take pictures, I've got all of them, every single piece I ever made in there. Yeah, and some of the bits I still wear. (Kay)

The pride she feels for her work in this respect outweighs the negativity and insecurity concerning the stigma attached to her offending and the judgement she has encountered since leaving prison. This compensation has great comfort and reassurance to her in an obvious sense of achievement and self belief. The items in their entirety are special, personal and highly accomplished in terms of production, of which Kay is most proud.

Using the skills that she acquired on the jewellery course Kay has considered how she has applied these since her release:

Now with the jewellery making I've incorporated dressmaking. Using the same sort of thing with the beading (form of jewellery design taught at HMP Sale), adding gems and stuff to embellish my clothes. So that's been really good. People sort of say to me 'how can you do it, it takes so much time?' But it really doesn't because I've learnt to do it really quickly.

You know what that was really good (jewellery making class), I really enjoyed that. Really did enjoy that. and like I said I've incorporated that now into the dress making, if I've got a plain top but it's a nice top and I wanna wear it out for a night out, I will make it and like some of the bits that I've made I actually do like put these jewellery things on to a big felt. Not like, well it's a bit like felt but like black and I stitch all the beads onto it and make like neckpieces. (Kay)

The creative freedom she encountered enabled her to pursue outlets and avenues of design that she felt would otherwise have been repressed. Surprising herself through her capabilities she reflects on this:

That's what I think it [prison] does, 'cause even if you're not an artistic person, it didn't matter 'cause you could like do whatever you want. I never thought that I could do jewellery.

Creativity was something that comes from within you. I mean not, I mean yeah you can take...(Kay)

Kay recalls one project she participated in where she was permitted to be as expressive as she wished using an array of materials. She spoke about a jewellery box she had made with delight, remembering a time that provoked content thoughts of her daughter whilst she was separated from her:

I put gems on it and called it something to do with my daughter and yes covered it with gems and all these little jewellery items and for me it was really personal because I had my daughter in mind, it was for her and everything pretty, everything that was shined and glistened and I think even the paper I used, it was a really nice wrapping paper, it was white and with gems. (Kay)

The work that Kay discusses is meaningful, purposeful to her in some way, if not to use/wear; the pieces of jewellery have sentimental value. Even if they are only to be stored away in a bag that is referred to occasionally. Not only do they reflect a time of great loss and emotion, they act as a powerful reminder of what can be taken positively from the prison experience. Although a painful time and one that Kay rarely discusses with others the work she produced throughout her imprisonment is of great relevance and importance to her, not least because of the connections with her daughter. She refers to her often in relation to realising ideas for pieces of jewellery. Figures 16-20 are just some of the outcomes that she

produced in the art room, combining experimentation with design and inspiration from loved ones.

Reflexive identity of Kay

Kay's strategy for dealing with her imprisonment is reminiscent to that of her approach to life and the ways in which she routinely interacts with others. Her pragmatic view of life supported her through prison and provided her with some clarity over her situation. Kay presents as being a communicative reflective in many aspects, although she leans towards traits of an autonomous reflexive in some respects.

The families of the autonomous reflexives in Archer's (2012, 2002) studies show a much greater degree of geographical mobility and a higher propensity towards divorce, separation and living apart. Kay was a single mother entering prison, reliant on maintaining her relationships with her children through her friendship circle inside and outside of prison. Having this support network provided her with comfort and strength. Wanting to please others, stay strong and present to her family as 'coping' or having 'coped' whilst imprisoned was of strict importance to Kay.

This notion is consistent with Archer's (2002) ideology of a communicative reflective being a 'people person'. This sub-group seemingly become absorbed by new ventures, friends and experiences that will see he or she make the best of time for the benefit of others. This was not too dissimilar to Kay's prison experience where

she actively sought to support and mentor younger women, especially those from similar backgrounds. Kay feels comfortable in familiar surroundings in this sense, fulfilling a motherly role and 'giving something back' that will not be sought (in her opinion) by what may be seen as selfish engagement in an activity.

Since leaving prison Kay has concentrated on others, attempting to put her experiences with the CJS behind her. In the absence of any fixed or long term employment Kay has spent time volunteering, helping those less fortunate and supporting her children. When speaking about her desires to eventually sell some of the textile and craft items she had made she sidelined the prospect in favour of voluntary and charitable work. There is the perception here that Kay feels insignificance in pursuing her own creative agenda when others could just as easily benefit from her help. This appeared to be the case when she considered all that she had done creativity in the two and a half years since her release.

I haven't sold anything [handmade craft items] to be honest with you, my daughter and my friend keep on going to me, especially when I keep showing off with all the things that I made [in prison] keep saying 'come on, start making and start selling' and every time I say yes I'm gonna do this and I end up doing something. Currently, currently I'm not working but I'm looking after my friend's elderly father who's 87, he's just moved into sheltered housing, he's got his own flat but because his daughter's working she's able to be there for him full time 'cause he had a stroke back in 2012 and in fact whilst he was in prison he had the stroke. He's got carers there but it's just to make sure that he's getting that personal attention and we've become quite close so I actually spend a lot of my days looking after him now, Monday to Friday certainly and even Saturdays.

I was in this café and I saw this sign saying a free Christmas lunch for all local senior citizens who live alone and I thought wow what a beautiful idea. That's so lovely and I said to the girl who was serving my tea said we're actually looking for volunteers and I thought to myself well my daughter's already made plans to go to her boyfriend's for Christmas day...but then I decided rather than go to that café that would probably have loads of volunteers anyway that I would go to my local sheltered housing where I see these people everyday. There's an old lady, 97, Irene, and I mean Sophie she will give you a run for your money, she's got it all there [points to head], she's still quite agile and skips about the

place and I thought to myself I wouldn't mind spending part of Christmas day with some of them, they're lovely. (Kay)

Bettie



Life since prison

Bettie's interview took place in Wales where she is now residing. After her release from prison in 2014 she moved back with her parents due to the circumstances of her imprisonment leaving her without a home and more recently she had moved into her own flat where her children could stay with her. Since leaving prison Bettie has been concentrating her efforts on starting a small handmade arts and crafts business from the spare room in her flat. She has a vast supply of materials in order to mass-produce jewellery, knitted items, greetings cards and other trinkets.

During the interview Bettie shared the experience of looking through her portfolio of artwork with her three daughters and they formed an integral part of the discussion around the origins of her interests in art. There was a great sense of pride

observed by Bettie when she spoke about the artwork she had produced during incarceration as well as work made during time spent on probation following her release. Bettie had a large portfolio of work with carefully mounted and curated artwork and photographs.

Bettie has continued to create artwork upon her release from prison, entering criminal justice competitions whilst on probation. Her daughters were able to comment on many of her pieces and they were aware of her interests and inspirations. Bettie's work is often centred on what she holds most dear in life, this is typically her family but also includes nature, animals and her faith. During the interview Bettie commented that she has never cared too much for creating work that has little emotional attachment or is seemingly meaningless to her. When creating work of limited emotional attachment she is more able to give it away or sell it. In HMP Sale she completed a number of commissions for other women who had recognised her talent for observational drawing. She had drawn a number of portraits of womens' loved ones and pets in prison and quickly understood the significance of such undertakings for them emotionally.

Coping with imprisonment

On arrival to HMP Sale Bettie selected all of the arts based courses available to her, knowing that they would offer the focus and stimulation that she craved as an initial coping mechanism. Her primary focus was to occupy and fill her time with practical enjoyable activity. She identified early on that this would most likely come in the form of artistic enquiry based on her past experience and engagement in the

arts. By her own admission Bettie gravitated towards a role within the prison environment that she was familiar with in terms of her previous experience (pre-prison). As a classroom assistant in the art room Bettie was able to maintain an identity as someone who was recognised for creativity and resourcefulness. Bettie described her involvement in the arts prior to imprisonment and how she had always been creative throughout her life:

So I did my A Level decades ago. And after that I didn't really do an awful lot, I had a place at art college but I turned it down cause I wanted to work with animals and I became a zoo keeper and I did do a bit of art whilst I was at the zoo. Then stuff happened and I met [says husband's name] and then I got back to...and I always drew you know with the kids, they've got their creativity. And then I worked as a teaching assistant and I got given the role of like in charge of all the art displays, the big display boards, taking stock of all the art equipment, you got...sort of like an art co-coordinator and I ran an art club after school for the kids. So yeah that's when I got, sort of started using art again. And then the bomb went off [laughs]. (Bettie)

Bettie tended to use the words 'focus' and 'focused' several times during the interview as a means of expressing the emotions felt and the purpose for engaging in means of creativity. She also comments that artistic activity stopped her from 'panicking' in the first instance about her imprisonment when she was first received into custody. It was something that she sought comfort and reassurance from. Her independence and desire to 'stay strong' for her own sanity dictated that she was to seek solace in creative activity.

Yeah but everything was just whatever art based thing I could see [selecting activities upon arrival to prison]. Tick, tick, tick, [laughs] cause I knew it was something that I could do and could give me a focus to keep my mind on something, off everything you know? And I know that within the first week I just started drawing in my cell when I wasn't out at work or anything. I'd just sit there and draw little pictures that I'd got out of books and stuff. Just drew pictures constantly cause it kept my mind focused on something. Stop me from panicking [laughs], yeah.

I never felt like I was ever being punished in that room, I took a lot out of that, which again was a good thing. It kept my mind focused, there was always something going on in my head as well. At times it was out of the view of others and being in the art department just made everyday a day where I could get through even though I don't think I...when whatever I would get through the day but it just lifted, it gave you that

focus on...right I'm doing this, and then everything I seemed worried about and that's where art almost became an addiction and almost an obsession. (Bettie)

Even though Bettie continues to face challenges as an ex-offender in the community she acknowledges the plight of others. At various times during the interview she refers to some of the women she met with whilst in prison, in particular younger women that she was able to advise or support in some way.

Kayleigh was one girl I will always remember, I always wonder, how is she doing? Don't know why. I just felt sorry for her, I think, when she had her kid taken, adopted out, I, my heart just broke for her and we had lots of little pep talks about getting on the straight and narrow and getting a job, getting somewhere to live and maybe in 18 years time and you'll get a phone call and it'll be your child saying.. and I wrote to her, did her a card and she was really chuffed and everything so.... (Bettie)

Bettie also acknowledged that the role of the prison art teacher could be a difficult one and that working with so many complex and challenging learners would inevitably have an impact on staff. She commented: *'they're [prisoners] not easy people to work with'* and *'you never know what's going on in people's [prison staff] lives'*. This consideration and empathy with the plight of others-even as a prisoner herself-provides further insight into Bettie's ability to cope and rationalise her sentence in order to maintain her nature in many respects.

Reflexive identity of Bettie

Given that autonomous reflexives possess self-confidence in their own internal conversations, it is not surprising that all 'autonomous reflexives' declare themselves to be decisive people, people who have no difficulty in coming to decisions (Archer 2003:211). Bettie is an autonomous reflexive. She said that she

would always have found a way of coping with imprisonment regardless of whether the arts had been available to her or not, however, it was a 'saviour' to her:

Yeah, I just can't say enough about being on a course [in art], it was my saviour. Everything yeah, just kept me focused, kept me sane, kept me calm. (Bettie)

Among autonomous reflexives it is unsurprising that considerably more of their internal conversation is about society, about the means, the 'costs' and the 'benefits' of seeking to realise one's ultimate concerns within it (Archer 2003: 212). Bettie's motivations determine the way she outwardly projects her thought process, particularly when she is talking about her family. What is interpreted by 'focus', 'staying strong' and 'survival'-all phrases used by Bettie-are conscious efforts by Bettie to ensure her behaviour and the activity she is seen to be engaged in and the outcomes of such are conducive to the wider end goal of family. This harmonisation and unity-which has been a constant objective-ensures that her family see her in a positive light. Autonomous reflexives become more detached from their original social moorings (Archer 2002) and this may suggest why Bettie initially struggled with the transition upon release, as it was perceived as being regressive rather than progressive.

Bettie made it very clear during the interview, articulating that her internal thought process in the first instance (upon arrival to HMP Sale and throughout her sentence that she would have found a way to rationalise and deal with her situation and imprisonment in a level headed way. The autonomous reflexive has confidence in their own internal conversations; it is not surprising that they declare themselves to be decisive people, people who have no difficulty coming to decisions (Archer 2003:211).

Bettie sets herself personal goals and targets in accordance to how she deals with problems and challenges in everyday life (outside of prison) and in response to what she holds dear in life. This ultimately determines her strategy for dealing with her imprisonment and how she could best manage situations unfolding outside of prison that she did not have usual autonomy over, raising children or keeping a home for instance. Instead, by maintaining a strong resilience to change and adversity (imposed on her through imprisonment) Bettie was able to draw on the facets of her personality that created a link to her former self. At several stages during the interview she made parallels between her former life (pre-prison) and certain experiences in prison, albeit similarities of work ethic, creative engagement and positive exchanges with others.

I felt like part of the team [in the prison art room] and I didn't feel like just another inmate. And definitely felt like I was doing something that was benefitting myself and definitely benefitting others. There was always gonna be people who were... but you see a lot and more who didn't think they could do something actually, then they produced something and you could see on their faces the pride they had. That was one of the main things I enjoyed and being around, but yeah for those days and hours in the morning and afternoon, even though I was still in prison I did feel like I was at work. (Bettie)

Bettie's family, specifically her three daughters who were all under eighteen at the time of her going to prison feature heavily throughout the interview. In many respects they can be viewed as the influence behind Bettie's creativity. Making her family proud and creating a sense of time having 'not been wasted' was important. Bettie wanted her family to know that she was keeping busy and engaging in purposeful activity whilst in prison and through her creations in the form of artwork, craft and jewellery she was able to do this. Bettie was notably proud of her achievements through her entry and exhibition of artwork in the annual Koestler Awards of which she continued to participate in during her time spent on probation following her release.

My family were proud, I was sort of [entering artwork into criminal justice arts competitions], my mum and dad would want me to do it. So I was doing a lot more and I remember the girls, if they'd been telling people what I've done for them [artwork for competitions]. Then I started winning awards, to get silvers, and they [family] were really proud of that. My family would say that 'she's had work submitted and exhibited'. Feedback from you know proper artists, so they were all good, friends, probably more friends in prison who knew more. I did keep in touch with some people before prison. (Bettie)

Great love and respect was shown for her parents throughout the interview, housing her following release they continued to support her financially and with childcare arrangements. However the loss of independence brought about when returning to the family home in her late forties set Bettie back in terms of her enhanced reflexive identity and higher order reflexivity previously practised.

When I was living up with my mum and dad's [upon release] and watching telly every night and I couldn't sit there and I'd just have to be doing something and that's why I got back into knitting because I'd just watch telly. But in the daytime at my mum and dad's for months I'd just shut myself in my room and just do beading and cards, anything that was art focused and crafts. (Bettie)

Bettie's father had assumed that her self-segregating away from conversation and the evening ritual of watching TV had been as a result of prison leaving her institutionalised. She was in fact actively filling her time with activity that gave her the most pleasure and a sense of freedom and escapism.

My dad did mention to me one day '*why did I shut myself in my room?*' Was it because it was something that I'd become used to? I didn't have the heart to say '*no it's because you're winding me up*' [laughs]. '*I wanted to stay away from you!*' [laughs]. Arts and crafts did definitely become my coping mechanism and still is to a point but now I've got the girls in my life and the things that I still do. (Bettie)

In prison she was able to attend work, form relationships with other women and earn and spend money. Moving back to Wales having spent several decades living in the South of England with her own family in a close knit community was in itself a monumental adjustment. Just as she had been when faced with the prospect of prison Bettie had to find a way of dealing with adjusting to outside life as well.

Archer (2003) suggests that autonomous reflexives seek to distance themselves

from their backgrounds or accept with equanimity that they are distancing themselves from their initial context of involuntary placement. In no sense, does this spell 'family relations'; indeed autonomous reflexives speak warmly about close family. It is rather that these people conceived of projects whose realisation would firmly separate them from their initial context and would also represent a social-economic break with it (Archer 2003:210).

Bettie sought to distance herself with the social norms and constraints inevitably imposed on her by living in the parental home through her limited choices at the time as well as the conditions of her parole. This is also relevant when considering Bettie's perception of wider society and how she may be received back into the community. Through her practice and continuation of arts and crafts in an enterprising manner Bettie has been able to manage her own re-integration back into society:

Certainly for me when you come out of prison and you feel like you've got this huge stigma attached to you, are you gonna get a job? I don't wanna have to keep talking about to complete strangers why I was in prison and going through everything. So to me, I thought that trying to set up my own business was definitely a way forward. Fit it with my life and I'm still trying to do that so I focused as soon as I got a little bit of money together the first thing I did was went and bought a load of jewellery, found a decentish' website for beads, findings, got myself a big loom. And I, sit there and just churn out jewellery all day long and just draw pictures, try to, and the I got back into big pictures for jewellery designs, a few pictures. I did, my mum's hair dresser, he's got some dogs and I he asked me if I'd do a portrait of the dogs, then he asked if I could do another one and I got paid. Then I just did pictures for some other people, then I set up my facebook page which I haven't done anything on since new year I think, er, yeah, but yeah it's something I want to do, I see art being in my life. I want to make it a career, or a part time career if I can. It's just, these are probably all excuses: time, money, knowledge, I think sometimes with art and craft, perhaps it's just finding a couple of people who like your stuff and they help promote you. (Bettie)

As typically among autonomous reflexives Bettie takes responsibility for herself, she does not afford blame for her situation-circumstances surrounding her

imprisonment-on anything or anyone. However, she does allude to some particular radical examples of wrong turnings and errors of judgment that subsequently lead to her imprisonment. Nevertheless, her acknowledgement of such are self diagnosed errors, self-directed corrections and self-monitored revisions, all of which are grounded in a development of self-knowledge (Archer 2003:210). This relates to earlier observations that Bettie was mentally prepared to take control and ownership of planned coping strategies for imprisonment with meaningful and conducive outcomes.

After release

It's something I want to do, I see art being in my life. I want to make it a career, or a part time career if I can. (Bettie)

Bettie refers to the lack of opportunity where she lives in terms of selling artwork or craft items and sustaining a living from it. However, as she discusses the inroads she has been able to make into pursuing self-employment it is evident that she has never given up on her ambitions and with limited resources, contacts or income her resilience doesn't falter.

After a tour of her local area Bettie pointed out the craft shop where upon her release from prison she once sold her craft items, items of knitting and jewellery.

I never really sold enough in the shop to sell the shelf fee. It's older ladies and they won't like a sort of Halloween made, it's just like.. [laughs]. Unless you get the odd quirky person pop in, sold quite a few of my little hats.

Some of the courses I did, I think it's called community first or something, it's quite nice I went along for the first time on my own and it's quite often the same people and they all sort of know each other doing jewellery making and stuff and some of them want to be. Quite often go along

cause there's lunch provided, it's quite nice, it's for networking. Met a couple of people and they might be interested in selling some of my jewellery (fig 22). (Bettie)



Figure 22: Collection of beaded bracelet for sale, 2014-2016

Autonomous reflexives are independent people, whose self-sufficiency makes each of them something of a 'loner', regardless of whether they are married etc. (Archer 2003: 2013). In Bettie's case she has three daughters whom she continues to raise however her independence juxtaposed with responsibility as a mother dictated that she needed an outlet in prison that would suppress the void of her loss of independence and being the primary carer of her children.

When Bettie spoke about her experiences of being part of a mentoring programme through the prison arts charity The Koestler Trust (mentoring scheme designed to

support people who have experience of the criminal justice system and who have an interest in the arts to develop their practice in the community) upon her release she describes how her mentor fails to maintain contact without prejudice. Bettie is able to rationalise situations, even if they impact on her in a negative way or are to her detriment.

I eventually paired up with a mentor up here [Wales], they did say was it a concern because she was a lot younger than me. She was fairly fresh out of Uni sort of thing but we met up in Conwry and had coffee and she was lovely, lovely girl, again a bit older than [says eldest daughter's name], which did feel a bit odd but she was very passionate about art, she'd done a lot of paintings and yeah we got on really well. I think we met up twice and I showed her some of my work and then we met up to do um a life drawing class [laughs] and I was like oh god, which again I would have never have done, but it was ok, managed to do it. Just glad it was a female [laughs]. And then I never heard anything, we were meant to meet up monthly, I never heard, I emailed her and didn't hear anything back and just let it go and then eventually contacted Koestler and said, oh no they contacted me about something and said 'how's it going?' and I said I've only met her 3 times and I haven't heard anything, then they emailed back and said they were very sorry, it doesn't happen but very often, but sometimes...I think her mum had health issues so again I don't know what happened.

At first I thought '*what are we going to do?*' there's not a huge amount to do up here. She [the mentor] would have probably come to Cardiff when I had the exhibition (figs 23 & 25). We were gonna go to galleries, down in Cardiff or whatever. She had other things, I don't know, or whatever. You know, I don't know there's much she could have helped me with other than being someone there to sort of maybe give me fresh ideas or just be there. (Bettie)



(Left) Figure 23: Illumination, The Koestler Trust exhibition poster, Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff, Wales, 2014.

(Right) Figure 24: *Bees*, photographs by Bettie for entry into Illumination, The Koestler Trust exhibition, Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff, Wales, 2014.

Artwork

Bettie found it difficult to select a specific piece of artwork to discuss; she asked if it needed to be the most 'powerful'. Eventually she selected on the basis that she could discuss a period in her imprisonment when she felt great loss and distance from herself and her family, in particular her daughters. The piece *Lost in the Present, Hope for the Future* was entered into an exhibition at a prestigious Gallery during her imprisonment and featured in the centerfold of the exhibition catalogue

(figs 25, 26 & 27). It is a piece that Bettie created for 'herself' rather than as a gift, commission or sale item, something of a rarity.

The one [artwork] I did for the Watts Gallery [project facilitated by HMP Sale and gallery]. So er...it was something that I wasn't even gonna do cause I was late into the project. I'd been working with the inmates and in my role as classroom assistant I was too busy helping everybody else to even think about doing anything and I was like, but then talking to the ladies who were doing the project and talking to the teacher I thought I'd love to do one [a picture/painting] tomorrow if there's time. So [says art teacher's name] gave me some paper and stuff to do in my cell, after we were locked up just had a bit of a brainstorm.

Even though the theme, image and story behind the piece and its visual representation symbolises her love and adoration for her children it is extremely personal and somewhat private. Unlike other artwork that can be seen displayed around Bettie's home this artwork is not prominent and it is rarely shown to anyone, despite its emotional poignancy and affiliations. Bettie does not believe this to be her strongest work artistically, however, the emotion that she felt whilst creating it, influencing the outcome, is secondary to the overall accomplishment of the piece.

It makes me feel, feel stronger; you know I don't think it's a brilliant piece of work by any, any means [laughs], personally. Um, but I'm glad I did it and I'm proud of it and in a way it was probably one of the first things I did in prison art wise that was really therapeutic. It kind of.. yeah, like you said, it's letting everything out without having to say it. (Bettie)

The subject matter and portraiture nature of the piece by her own admission is out of Bettie's comfort zone. Her preference has always been to create artwork that depicts wildlife, music, fashion or popular culture, relating to her own interests and those of others. She describes the most part of her work and artistic output to be 'functional', serving a purpose to the viewer or receiver. There is selflessness about this that Bettie finds rewarding. However, when asked to participate in an arts project that demanded an emotional response Bettie has been encouraged to create something in this particular piece that forces her to identify with her anguish and loss during imprisonment. When considering 'herself' and how she was feeling at a particular moment in time, creating a portrait was fitting:

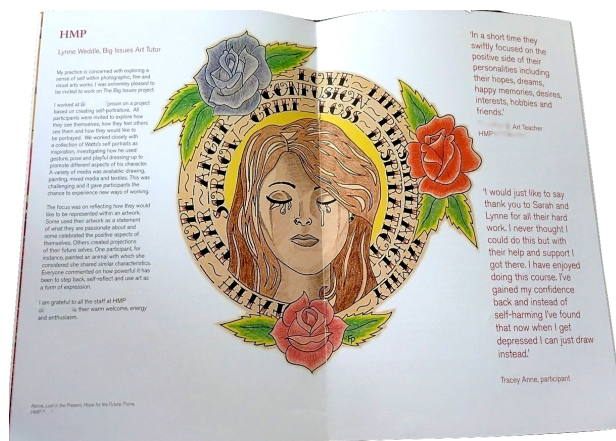
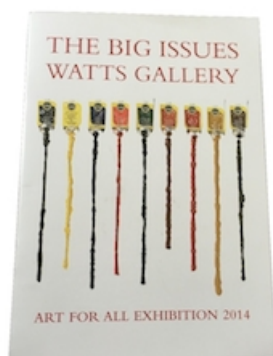
I'd never do portraits

Normally I don't do kind of spontaneous artwork, I would never do self-portrait.

I just had these kinds of words just running. Even though I felt almost despairing, it was more of hope; I just knew that I wasn't going to give up till I got my kids back. So, I was trying to think and I just came up with these words about how I wanted to feel, how I knew I would feel in the future, just came to me. I wanted to do it like a tattoo, like old school tattoo. An image with a retro feel, kind of all just came together in my mind as a portrait of how I felt there and then and then so really sad, depressed and dammed which is why I did the tears on it. My eyes were shut but I wanted to incorporate the fact that my goal for the future was my family which is why I did the 3 roses cause they represent each of the girls. And then I just thought if I did a swirl around starting with how I actually feel now and how it all just sort of radiated, not negative things but emotional, low emotional things and then it all starting radiating out into positive things, my goals for the future. (Bettie)



Figure 25: *Lost in the Present, Hope for the Future*, coloured pencil on paper, 2013.



(Left) Figure 26: Watts Gallery exhibition cover for the Big Issues project 2014.
(Right) Figure 27: Centrefold Watts Gallery exhibition cover for the Big Issues project featuring Bettie's piece: *Lost in the Present, Hope for the Future*, 2014.

For Bettie the opportunity to engage in this project (albeit with scepticism in the first instance) dictated that she was to create a piece purely as a response to a set brief. Although she was used to working to the demands and requests of others, creating artwork for the purposes of self-expression and representation was a new concept. Bettie struggled at first with the idea but quickly channeled her influence and ideology of the artwork into her passions in life, namely her children and love of retro style and tattoo art. The piece itself demanded explanation, self-projection and interpretation of her feelings over what she had forfeited as a result of imprisonment. In the confines of her cell she was able to create a unique response through the medium of a pencil drawing:

The face represents me and all the tears I have cried. The words swirling around my head show not only how I am feeling now but that I have great hope for the future. Sometimes bad things happen to good people! The three roses represent what keeps me going: my wonderful children. (Bettie)

(Watts Gallery 'The Big Issues' exhibition catalogue, 2014)

Bettie had not viewed the piece for a long period since leaving prison; she recalls the time when she produced it:

It must have been quite early in my sentence so I was still very scared, confused, quite panicky. Just completely gutted, worried about the girls,

and I still hadn't sort of got used to the prison regime and that unnerved me quite a lot.

Bettie has never discussed the piece at length with her daughters but she has shared her successes in terms exhibition and publication:

They'd be like and say 'oh mum', it's all sappy and emotional and everything, they don't like doing all that emotional stuff. But I also know that they're proud of it and they know it's been in an exhibition and the brochure and I've got that brochure to show. And that I, I think that they're proud of the fact that it's about them even though it's a portrait of me, it's about them really and I think yeah, I know they like it. We kind of have this thing where we kind of gloss over things cause like I said they don't like being over emotional and sappy. Maybe because they don't want to let themselves be because if they let it go then they won't be able to stop. I don't know. (Bettie)

I look back and it has the potential to make me emotional, remembering those really dark, dark days. But in a way it doesn't. (Bettie)

I do look at it from time to time and it does make me think 'that's then', it was kind of a whole world away and you know I'm still not where I want to be but I'm getting there. And you know that's all written down there. (Bettie)

Bonnie



Introduction

Bonnie's comments around her initial thoughts and feelings of imprisonment indicate that she had mentally prepared herself. Bonnie entered prison on remand awaiting trial and based on her offence-that she was pleading guilty to-she expected a long sentence.

I didn't really have the tears and things, I'm just carrying my unborn child and I need to be ok for him. (Bonnie)

On more than one occasion Bonnie suggests that her children were the prominent factor in getting her through both her first few days of prison and the rest of her sentence. Bonnie says that she never cried whilst in prison and attributes this to the fact that she wouldn't allow herself to due to being heavily pregnant when she first arrived into prison. She did not allow herself to feel sorry or sad for herself when

her actions had ultimately caused suffering to her children and she had to carry on to provide for them in whatever way she could whilst incarcerated.

At first, it wasn't even about filling my time it was about utilizing my time in the best way I could, what might help me when I'm released and I think I quite quickly worked out...and I'm not one of these people who says 'oh my god I committed a crime and therefore I'll never get a job', but I had young children, I knew what my offence was, it restricted me somewhat and in my mind I was always thinking 'what can I do as my own business?' on my release. So I took part in...I think it was a graphic design course, which was one of my first ones I think. Um and in that it sort of let me know how I could advertise a business, um and then I really moved from there. (Bonnie)

Bonnie had not participated in any particular arts projects or activities prior to imprisonment with the exception of a candle-making course some years ago.

Engaging in art was not really something that she had considered until she could see some vocational relevance to it. In prison she reports dealing with her time and impending situation in a practical and meaningful sense. This included the intention of setting up a business or enterprise that could potentially generate an income or lead to some kind of employment upon release. The fact that Bonnie was also able to engage with something enjoyable and productive in the form of jewellery making would mean that she also had a creative outlet. She often refers to the notion of 'time passing by quicker'. On one occasion she describes getting 'lost' in her work and the companionship she experienced in the art room:

I did think it [working in the art room] made it go faster, on reflection when you look at when I eventually had my baby and I was on mother and baby that occupied a lot of my time but if I was to reflect on times when before I had the baby you know it took your mind off things. It was somewhere to go and kind of get lost, or to talk, I had friend around that table [jewellery maker's work space]. You know you get on with certain people. (Bonnie)

Bonnie mentioned relationships within HMP Sale a great deal throughout the interview, especially with other women in the art room and certain staff. The 'jewellery table' is mentioned often and the dynamics of this group and the ethos shared among the group of women working around the table. Each of these women

were in a position of trust due to the nature of running a small enterprise business with materials and stock. In order to secure work as a jewellery worker a degree of trust and responsibility was to be demonstrated. The unity of the women, the support they had for each other and the friendships formed were important to Bonnie. She refers frequently to women that she worked with and how she stayed in contact with many of them since leaving prison. There was a certain amount of camaraderie and the sharing of ideas within the group of jewellery workers.

If you had an idea about something you could take it to the group.
(Bonnie)

Trust and responsibility are attributes that Bonnie feels most strongly about when reviewing her place and status within the art room, more specifically the jewellery team. The way she was treated as both a person and as an individual from prison staff were very important to Bonnie whilst contemplating her sentence and how she coped with imprisonment looking back:

You feel like you have a sense of worth, it's actually seeing that you're a trusted and reliable and trustworthy person in an environment that unfortunately mainly seems like a very untrustworthy and unreliable environment.

I was always made to feel like that. (Bonnie)

Bonnie talks about ownership and possessions being important, having something (or things) to call your own and have responsibility and accountability for. She mentions 'trust' and the pertinence of this on several occasions during the interview. She associates trust afforded to her in the form of responsibility for others' learning and autonomy over her own learning within the department and the freedom this brings.

Trust and responsibility promotes discussion around ownership concerning not only material items but space and environment as well. Bonnie sat in one particular place around the jewellery table and had her own storage space for her materials

and equipment. She quickly assumed a role as a mentor to aspiring jewellery makers due to her flair for jewellery design and her standing within the room as classroom assistant. Bonnie enjoyed this part of her role within the art room greatly. Being given autonomy over how she would coordinate the jewellery table, it's workers and the orders taken from fellow inmates provided Bonnie with a great sense of purpose as a senior member of the team.

I think there's always support there, you know it's always a big thing for me, I think the big thing for me working in that department was the trust element and being left to my own devices. Not having to be watched over 24/7.

Yeah but it was just the whole thing, that's got a long way for a lot of things, you know it's like something saying to you 'well I'll give you this if you do this for me', well no! It's not me, it's not what I'm about and obviously that was what was recognized by the staff in me. That I could be trusted. (Bonnie)

Bonnie also acknowledges that this trust provided her with confidence after the ordeal of being sent to prison and deemed to be a criminal in the eyes of most, including her family that had suffered. Acknowledging her age, the time she would have to serve and her options beyond release Bonnie utilised and maximized all the opportunities available to her at HMP Sale and this in turn became her coping strategy.

Okay, I'm in this situation. I'm knocking on 40's door, so it was my first time, so it's not like I'd been in and out. Thinking about my future, what am I gonna do? (Bonnie)

Bonnie is driven by end goals, positive outcomes and meticulous planning. Towards the end of her sentence she engaged in a preparatory teacher-training course (PTLLS-preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector). Not only did this course provide her with support in delivering learning in her role as a classroom assistant she saw it as an investment in her future. Since leaving prison Bonnie trained as a hair stylist. Currently qualified up to level 2 she now plans to study

hairdressing to level 3 so that she could potentially teach and train others using her PTLLS qualification.

The only thing that I did that's worth anything outside, in terms of academically was the PTLLS course.

When I've done my level 3 [NVQ in hairdressing] my understanding is that I don't actually need a University degree to teach and that.

So all the time that I was there [HMP Sale], going back to some of the things that you've asked me, everything I was doing was always with a view of 'what can I do?' [upon release] and even when I was working in the jewellery department I was thinking 'okay if I get a contract here when I leave and get them [other prisoners] to make me things and I can sell them outside'. (Bonnie)

Bonnie related this determination and enterprising nature to her life experiences before prison when she had broken the law to sustain a somewhat luxurious lifestyle. She had been by her own admission 'enterprising' in her approach to her criminality and making money:

I think I always had it [enterprising skills] when I was into [criminal activity] before that [before prison] was quite enterprising [laughs], I never really had a need to do anything, I was just a mum to a child. But you know inside me I think I've always had it. If I look at my previous jobs they've always been in prison for instance have always been in sales.

I say I'm not your stereotypical prisoner, I don't believe I am. But I think yeah, I was always looking for a way, in my mind when I was in there [prison] I was always thinking 'what am I gonna do?' 'What is gonna make me a living?' (Bonnie)

Bonnie is a pragmatist, whilst she was able to see how the lure of 'easy money' and a lavish lifestyle-as she had once enjoyed prior to imprisonment-could be motivation for some to engage in criminal activity, the emotional pull of her children and their welfare was far stronger:

I came crashing down, I went from having a really high life, but nothing was okay as long as I had my children, it was absolutely fine as long as I had my children.

I can see being on that side of the fence I could see how easily people can be influenced into crime and a criminality lifestyle. Because the reality is once you have a criminal record then you can quite easily come out and carried on and do whatever, you know it's an easy way for me to make money. Having children changed my..I mean I don't know if it does

with other people but it's changed my perspective on what is important. I can never ever lose my children, not for any circumstance, not for anybody, anything. Therefore, I have to stay on the right side of the law. I can see why other individuals do come in and out. (Bonnie)

Reflexive identity of Bonnie

When asked if she thought that a tenacious and resilient side to her personality was evident prior to imprisonment she said that she thought not and believed her resilience to be a byproduct of incarceration. Bonnie actually contemplates what life may have been like had she not gone to prison and she was left to deal with the aftermath of her partner's imprisonment alone. The agreement between Bonnie and her partner in the event of arrest and conviction had been for Bonnie to take care of the two children. This was later jeopardised when she was also arrested and subsequently convicted.

Bonnie and her partner had been subject to a confiscation order relating to their offences and this led to Bonnie losing her house and possessions. Imprisonment for Bonnie actually meant that she did not have to deal with these issues directly, as she had no control over them from prison. Her then two year old daughter was in the care of her parents and Bonnie had parental control of her newborn son in prison housed on the mother and baby unit. Bonnie considers this to be preferable than having to have dealt with the consequences of her and her partner's actions within the community in the aftermath of their high profile offending coming to light. Prison offered Bonnie the opportunity to reflect subjectively on how her life was potentially spiraling prior to her conviction:

I think it was more a case of underlying issues, cause even when we were doing what we were doing, I knew in the back of my mind it was

wrong [criminal activity leading to imprisonment] and I think it's just certain hang ups or certain decisions you made in your life and I think when it gets to rock bottom, and I lost everything, I lost everything in that situation. I even lost my family to a certain extent. Cause I didn't speak to them for nine months and the only reason they [family] spoke to me was to tell me that my daughter had a heart condition. So I had to learn all of that whilst inside [prison] and I was, my hands were tied, I couldn't do anything about it, I couldn't be there.

I lost a lot of you know chances and things, but then I was given a lot of chances and I think that, you know what we been saying about my sentence being reflective and that, not losing my son you know, coming out of being there for my daughter's operation. And I kind of felt like God was watching over me and something helped me and I don't know it made me a much better person I think. I don't snap as easily, I'm much more laidback and yeah it's quite ironic really cause it's probably the opposite that usually happens to most people [upon release from prison]. (Bonnie)

Bonnie says that she no longer swears. Having been in prison where swearing was a routine occurrence the use of bad language made her more conscious about how she herself sounded to others. She stopped swearing in order to disassociate herself with a former self and the subculture systematic of prison.

Bonnie's admissions of how she feels she has turned her life around, become more tolerant of others and is able to critically reflect on her wrongdoings, this is most revealing.

So yeah, I think it [prison] was the making of me really. (Bonnie)

Artwork

Bonnie brought a large bag of items that she had made in prison along with her to the interview. She had not opened the bag (fig 31) for some time and therefore had needed to familiarise herself with its contents. When considering a powerful or poignant piece to discuss she was immediately drawn to a set of hairclips that she had made for her daughter but had refrained from giving them to her during her imprisonment.



Figure 28: Beaded hairclips for Ava, 2013.

It's gonna be this [hair clips] (fig 28) then without even having to think about it. Cause I made these for my daughter with her name on. I think my kids were always the focus of everything I was doing, but I wanted to do something for them, for her. And I couldn't do..that's all I could do, make her something, there was nothing else I could do for her as a mother, this is something I could do cause it was where I worked and I could make something for her. (Bonnie)



(Above) Figure 31: Mix bead choker and cuff set, 2013 & Figure 32: Beaded keychain designs, 2012-2014.

(Below left) Figure 33: Jewellery in prison issue tea pack bag, 2012-2014.

(Below right) Figure 34: Metallic beaded choker and bracelet set, 2013.





Figure 33: beaded spider chain choker, 2013.

Prior to the interview Bonnie shared an intimate moment with her daughter when she showed her the contents of the bag of jewellery. This was something she had not done before yet was significant to articulating how she felt about the items now and the response from her daughter:

I showed the bag to Ava [daughter] yesterday and actually she picked out that [points to a necklace on the table], (fig 33) it was like Aladdin's cave for her. She picked out a couple of pieces, which she took. (Bonnie)

When asked how her daughter had responded when she discovered that her mother had made several pieces of jewellery, including pieces for her-or with her in mind-Bonnie described the pride felt:

I'd made them? Yeah! Yeah very, very [happy]. She's taken some clips because she's staying with my friend at the moment and she said 'I wanna give them to her [the friend] and I wanna tell her that my mummy made these'. Yeah, yeah she's really proud of them and all the time I was where I was [prison] she [daughter] always thought I was at work. This is part of what of what she thought I was doing at work [jewellery making]. (Bonnie)

For Bonnie the pieces of jewellery bring back several memories from her time spent in prison, in both a positive and negative sense. She recalls how she felt powerless to her situation and being away from her child meant that she was not able to connect physically and emotionally [owing to distance and separation]. The act of giving out pieces of jewellery to her daughter routinely on visits was both comforting and disturbing for her. Discussing these experiences brought back memories of the separation and how she dealt with it:

It [reviewing the jewellery] just brings it all back to me. Brings back that time when I was apart from her, brings back flashbacks of when I used to see her [at visits], about how restricted and limited our time was, about how I can tell and see how affected she was and how I couldn't do anything about it and how I'm never ever going back there again. Well not intentionally. (Bonnie)

Jacqueline



Jacqueline worked as a textiles assistant in the art room for a period of four months in 2013. She immediately identified with this role and considered it to be-in her words-a 'good fit' for her interests and skill set when advertised. The textiles teacher had informed her that it had been increasingly difficult to recruit someone to the role and Jacqueline saw this as an opportunity. Prior to her imprisonment Jacqueline had not been involved with the Criminal Justice System before, having

never been arrested or even knowing anyone who had ever been to prison. Her offence-being an isolated incident-lead to her incarceration and subsequently introduced her to concepts and experiences that she had not been privy to before.

I've never even been [arrested], never even spoken to a police officer before. (Jacqueline)

Jacqueline did not know what to expect when she entered prison and had preconceived ideas of what it would be like based on her limited knowledge, largely attributed to watching television programmes. Media coverage of women's prison dramas had filled her with apprehension regarding how she was to behave and how she may be received by the other women. Upon arrival to prison her thinking quickly turned to survival and how she would interact with other inmates:

As bad as it sounds I'd watched the whole of series of Bad Girls and so I already had this idea..I had this idea of you know, you're gonna go on and there's gonna be this woman who's in charge of the place. A prisoner, do you know what I mean?

I was terrified I would say, and no one kind of explains to you how everything works. So I, I got there about ten o'clock at night and fortunately I arrived at the same time as a girl who'd been there before. So she told me that I could fill a flask up with hot water 'cause you can't get a kettle in your room. It was all like what the hell? When I woke up in the morning, I daren't even step outside my cell on the first morning 'cause I was like what the hell's going on?

I had no idea about anything and I was just kinda stuck in a cell, crying, a lot. (Jacqueline)

Jacqueline's initial exposure to prison life left her somewhat anxious in the first instance, spending several hours in her cell crying and contemplating her situation. She quickly identified though that she needed to gain employment or engage in any activity in order to gain some control over her impeding situation. An emphasis of keeping busy and spending as much time out of her cell as possible once the initial shock had waned became imperative to Jacqueline's psychological stability.

Describing this mental thought process as being in 'fight or flight mode', Jacqueline was too scared to leave her cell. However, she was also scared at the prospect of spending long periods in it too. When choosing an activity during her induction at HMP Sale she was drawn to any artistic outlet available borne from a love of creating textile items. Her interests had spanned from a life-long love of sewing and embroidery. Prior to her imprisonment Jacqueline had engaged in textiles but family life and work commitments had always taken precedence. Being in custody gave Jacqueline the experience and time to develop her interests in textiles and other creative mediums. When selecting a course of study and employment for her stay at HMP Sale any creative programme appealed to Jacqueline and she chose to attend all the courses on offer including graphic design, jewellery making, textiles and arts and crafts.

Before going in [to prison] I was always into my sewing, I did my embroidery and my cross stitch and stuff like that. For me that was my outlet when I was at home so if I could have had that while I was in there it was something that was a bit more normal to me. (Jacqueline)

Following a turbulent time with her ex-partner shortly after her release Jacqueline relocated from her home in the South of England to North Wales to start a new life. Currently working in a factory, Jacqueline is studying towards an access course with a view of attending University.

Relationships

When considering her time in the art room Jacqueline continually brought the conversation back to the other women, friends she had made and those she felt compelled to help and support, namely younger women. Jacqueline said that she 'loved' being an assistant and maintains that it was a 'lifeline' whilst she was imprisoned. She saw it as a unique opportunity. Jacqueline wanted the responsibility and liked being with other women, especially those with similar creative interests or those that she could support through her assistant role. She discusses the importance of being able to shift focus from the realities of prison life onto something or someone else.

I think the role of the assistant is like, not like being needed in a needy was yourself but erm being, having purpose for someone else in there takes it away from woe is me, 'cause everybody in there, no matter how long they've got are going through their own personal hell. (Jacqueline)

Relationships for Jacqueline in prison were important and she mentions different women by name and how they played a role in her ability to get through the prison experience through supporting each other, laughing, crying with each other and forming bonds. She specifically talks about her relationship with fellow participant Bettie. Their bond remains strong since their releases in 2013 and 2014, regularly writing, sending drawings and making gifts for each other. Although they live close to one another, seeing each other has been difficult and contact through letters and social media has been of constant comfort for both women. Their passion for sharing artifacts and artworks they had made began when they worked and lived together at HMP Sale. Establishing each other's interests and tastes in art, music, film and so on meant that each was able to create personalised pieces including jewellery (fig 36), cards, drawings and soft furnishings.

I don't think she [Bettie] knows how good she good she is sometimes, 'cause with drawing..well she did me two, I've got them upstairs somewhere, I'm a bit obsessed with Jared Leto (figs 34 & 35), and so for

my birthday she did me two pictures of him. Oh they're amazing.
(Jacqueline)

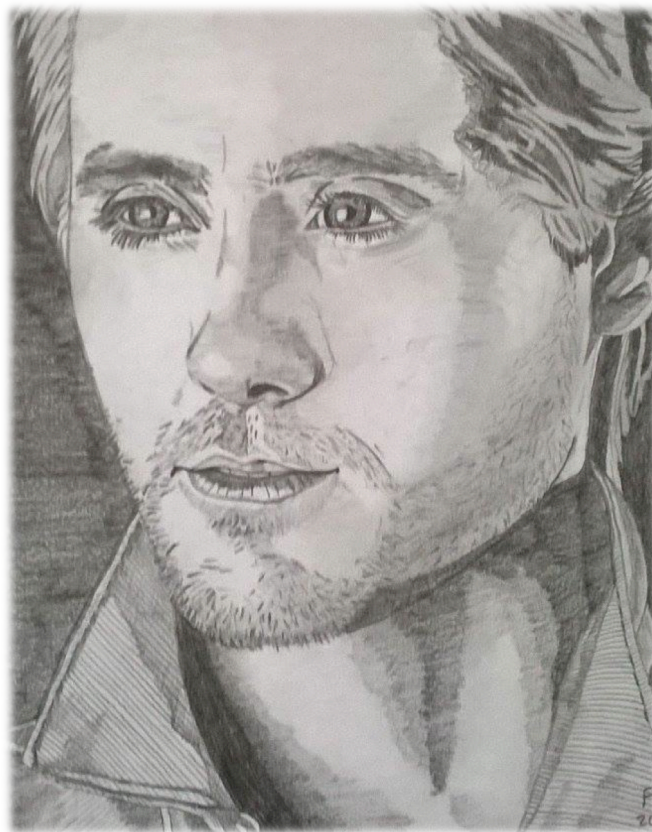


Figure 34 and 35: Pencil drawings of actor Jared Leto by Bettie for Jacqueline, 21.0 x 29.7cm, 2014

Similarly Jacqueline recalls a time when she made a birthday card for Bettie using images of her favourite band:

I made a pop up card. Yeah it was Avenged Sevenfold, and she sewed me my card for my birthday which was like a big tea cake 'cause she'd sewn for mine I drew for her [laughs]. (Jacqueline)



Figure 36: Loom bracelet gift from Bettie, 2013.

Jacqueline also has a strong bond with a young woman she shared a cell with who is currently serving a life sentence at HMP Sale. Jacqueline regularly writes to *Anna* and has even visited her. When reflecting on these relationships Jacqueline viewed them as being powerful and significant when considering coping strategies. She was able to assume a role as a friend or motherly figure and drew strength from these friendships in order to become self-sufficient and grow in confidence. Some of the relationships and the support network that she had in her life prior to imprisonment were not conducive to asserting agency, having power over situations or maintaining confidence in good decision making:

Finding out that I can have friends which is quite bizarre. 'Cause when I was with my ex-husband I lost all of my friends, I had no friends and I don't normally like women, I'm not, women do my head in, they're too bitchy, too catty, they drive me nuts. It [prison] kind of gave me the confidence to have friends again, have relationships again and I know it's kind of it's forced a little bit but like Bettie, she was my best mate in there, Anna, Amy although things got a little bit funny there with her, she went a bit odd for a while. But it's shown me that I could do something on my own when it came to it. I could cope and I could deal with it and I could just get on with it and kind of made a bit of a life for myself in there as bizarre as that sounds.

We did get away with like blue murder we the amount of stuff we had,

like Anna, the amount of stuff she had in her cell was unbelievable, pens and paper, but for her that was a good thing because she didn't sleep. Yeah 'cause we shared didn't we [a cell with Anna]...and she didn't sleep, so if she wasn't sleeping she could just sit there and get a loom out. It kept her calm, because if she couldn't sleep she's just do that.

I tend to focus on other people so like when Alicia came in [to prison] I helped her and making sure she was ok. I think you learn things about yourself and you know, I mean we were like a screwed up little family on house block four. When we weren't at work or anything we were usually in my cell, we'd be in there and the music would be playing and we'd be having a laugh and we'd just chill out and relax and just have a laugh. And being where we were we'd have the best of laughs, considering where we were sometimes we were crying with laughter. But we had that nice little connection, we all got along so well. (Jacqueline)

Reflecting

Although Jacqueline says that she does not routinely think about her prison experience, the time she spent in HMP Sale has been significant in relation to how she now lives her life. The freedom she enjoys in terms of creative outlets, knowing herself, understanding her personality and her expectations in life by her own admission can somewhat be attributed to her time spent in prison. Despite being in regular contact with women who she befriended during her sentence Jacqueline comments that she does not often think about prison to the extent where she forgets that she was ever there. In fact, Jacqueline was unable to recall the exact dates and the duration of her sentence.

It was that long ago that I can't remember how long ago it is since I left there, I can't really work it, I should really know the years but I don't.

I kinda shut it off that I was there [prison] and like my mum was talking about it and my mum was like 'oh do you ever think about it?' [being in prison]. I'm like I don't, it's not even a memory, it never existed, it never happened. (Jacqueline)

Recalling her experiences during the interview brought about rationale and reason as to why she had been so readily able to disconnect and disassociate with her time spent at HMP Sale. Her incarceration had meant that she was able to reflect and build on her rehabilitative strategy whilst imprisoned in order to gain a greater status of agency and post-traumatic psychological freedom. The pain that she openly admits she inflicted on her daughters due to her absence in their lives she now feels has been rectified as a result of what she has achieved since leaving prison. A reluctance to dwell on that time is out of respect for her family. When preparing for her interview she consulted with her mother and described to her how she felt about opening up about a time that she had firmly closed the door on. This provided her with some insight as to how her family had felt about her imprisonment, although rarely discussed:

It's bizarre when I talk to people about it [prison] like my mum I say it wasn't a bad experience although it was prison, erm you have to learn about yourself and you have to learn where your strengths are, you don't have a choice really. It's either fight or collapse.

Funny thing my mum said this that when I was in there [prison] she said I started to go back to the Jacqueline she knew. Even then I'd started to go back to the Jacqueline that she remembered. It was actually weird she said going to prison was the best thing that could have happened to me.

Yeah. She actually said that going to prison was the best thing that had ever happened to me, 'cause going in there got me away from everything. (Jacqueline)

Reflexive identity of Jacqueline

Jacqueline has been a more difficult person to define in terms of her reflexive identity. Her responses suggest a state of heightened continued autonomous thought processing, present throughout her life course. There are instances drawn from her responses that suggest active meta-reflexivity is at play and her powers of self determination and decision making are prolific in terms of self discovery and articulation. However, there is an underlying tendency for Jacqueline to seek the approval of others, assume a role that presumes her reminiscent of a communicative reflexive. The relationships she speaks of, past and present are indicators of such.

Archer suggests that 'a manifest lack of enthusiasm, blending personal uncertainty and sometimes apprehension with a countervailing desire to make their parents or a parent proud of them' is prevalent amongst the communicative reflexives (Archer 2012:130). This is a consequence of their standing in the home life they were born into which they value and seek to replicate to a certain extent. This concern for the relational goods encountered in their home life (e.g. love, reliance, caring, trust) and the reproductive projects to which it lead, "acted as a filter, sifting friendships, social activities and leisure pursuits to ensure congruity with their families' normality" (Archer 2012:99).

Prior to her imprisonment it could be observed that Jacqueline was a communicative reflexive or at least presenting as such. The events leading up to her incarceration were the amalgamation of poor decision-making and a lack of opportunity due to a noxious relationship. The families of the autonomous reflexives in Archer's (2002) study show a much greater degree of geographical

mobility and a higher propensity towards divorce, separation and living apart. As a result of Jacqueline's imprisonment her daughters were re-housed several hundred miles away from her and continue to live a considerable distance from her upon release. Despite this separation through distance, Jacqueline remains responsive, hopeful and optimistic for the future, with the opinion that the separation and distance is in the interests of the children.

As aforementioned, there is an indecisive reckoning in regards to Jacqueline's reflexive identity and how this can be interpreted. She displays powers of heightened reflexivity consistent with that of meta-reflexives who indeed demonstrate the ability to exercise greater levels of reflexivity leading to more meaningful internal dialogue.

It [prison] wasn't actually that bad an experience, obviously the first couple of weeks were but when you found your feet and you know who to avoid and who you can talk to and you settle it's not a bad memory as such. And I made some great friends out of it.

I mean I would never tell my children that it was a good experience, you know the prison side of it.

You know you've got the strength to do it, being in there, it kind of gives you that. (Jacqueline)

Profundity such as this does indeed suggest strides towards a greater state of meta-reflexivity. As she attempts to be rational at all times, there is reasoning and thought process behind each decision. There is the sense of motivation for the greater good, protecting people, protecting one's self, making sense of a situation and then dealing with it and so on.

Don't know it [prison] was good, it's bizarre to say that, I never thought..I don't know, if you said before to me that I was gonna go..if a fortune teller was gonna say you're gonna go to prison, I'd be like oh no and actually having a couple..when I first went in there I thought oh no what am I gonna do, my life's over, my parents didn't even know for the first three weeks that I was in there, it was only that my ex's sister told them, I couldn't have that conversation with my mum. Erm, but no, had it's bad times but it had a lot of good times.

It's really weird how you do kinda forget people [that were in prison]. When me and Nige [partner] talk about it I kinda shut it off that I was there and like my mum was talking about it and my mum was like 'oh do you ever think about it?' [being in prison]. I'm like I don't, it's not even a memory, it never existed, it never happened. (Jacqueline)

Jacqueline's current goal is to attend University. Archer (2003, 2012) describes the entry to university for communicative reflexives to be unavoidably confrontational with contextual discontinuities. With the status quo changing to respond to such a life change consideration is given to accessibility due to family, work and geographical commitments. Jacqueline routinely considers practicality with a sense of cautiousness when reviewing her options. Seemingly quite a selfless act, she values and to some extent relies on the opinion and condolence from others before committing to any action, assessing the impact of such upon said others. In this respect, the opinions of her children and mother play pivotal roles in the sequencing of Jacqueline's future.

As the sub-group describes, Jacqueline is a people person, on the other hand absorbed by her new friends and keeping up with her old ones, prefers to do things in a group of 'similar and familiars', and generally sees the ready array of possible University activities as something she should make an effort to try but never does because her interpersonal relations always make it inconvenient (Archer 2012:145).

Artwork: the prison link

In prison Jacqueline got really into crocheting in a big way, more so than sewing, something that had been a lifelong passion. She would often spend hours crocheting in her cell, making things for her family and other women and generally keeping herself busy in the evenings and at weekends. She took inspiration and guidance from other women who taught her new techniques, especially some of the older women on her residential area. She spoke about how the act of crocheting once immersed in making and following a pattern or design kept her mind and attention focused solely on that creative act. The complexity of following a crochet pattern required concentration from the maker:

I'm just thinking about that [crocheting], well especially if I'm following a crochet pattern. Especially as they switch between American and English, like the codes change so all my focus goes on that, which again is a good thing 'cause you're not having to think about anything else, your brain can just focus and stop for a while, which is nice. (Jacqueline)

When Jacqueline discusses artwork and the craft items that she has made both in and outside of prison there is little emotional attachment expressed in terms of wanting to keep things as there is with some of the other women. When asked to review an item that she had made during her sentence she found it difficult to locate and could not remember where she had stored them, given them to or indeed what she had specifically made. Jacqueline had given many pieces away, made things for people or simply put items in storage and not thought about them since. The work she produced in prison in the way of craft items is no longer important to her, she views it very much as momentarily and is more interested in the here and now.

Even though Jacqueline has kept in regular contact with a woman currently incarcerated at HMP Sale as well as Bettie she has put the experience of prison to the back of her mind. Taking part in this study had forced her to consider a time

spent in HMP Sale in a way that she had never done before. Turning her back on that or period and not having to think about it in any real detail was in fact a way of dealing with the situation and moving on.

Jacqueline has never openly discussed her experiences with her two daughters and says this is largely due to not wanting to glamourise the experience in any way.

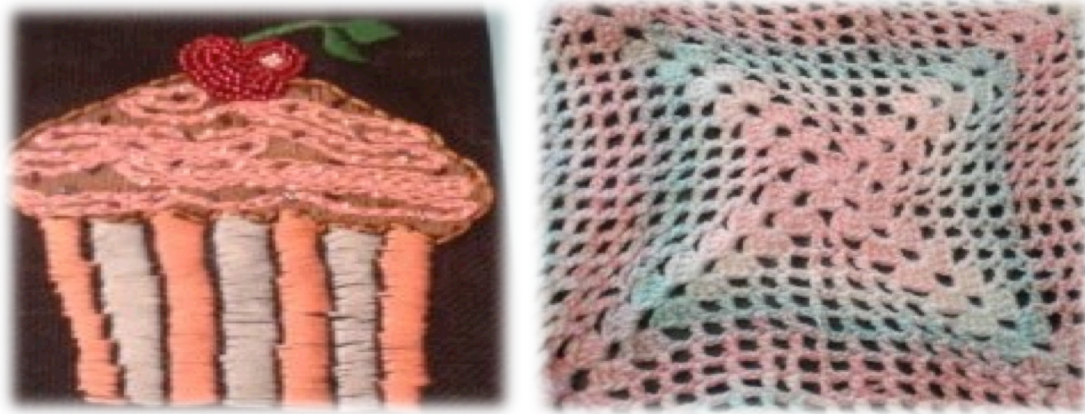
She would like them to know that she regrets going to prison and has learned from the experience. In respect of Jacqueline saying that prison was not 'all bad' and at times she laughed 'uncontrollably' with some of the other women, she does not wish her daughters to believe that she had an easy time in prison. This may have led to her becoming complacent (in her mind) or presumed as not taking their separation for that period seriously.

Jacqueline has kept very few creative works for herself, preferring to give items away to loved ones:

I made my mum and nan bracelets with roses on (fig 37) and my nan still wears it now, the clasp has broken on my mum's where she still has it.
(Jacqueline)



Figure 37: Loom bracelet for Nan, 2013.



(Left) Figure 38: Hand embroidered card design, 2013.

(Right) Figure 39: crocheted blanket, 2014.

Passing on knowledge to her daughters was of the upmost importance to

Jacqueline:

Emma my youngest daughter she's a real artist, she's constantly got a sketchbook in her hand, that's all she does all the time. So yeah proper little artists, anything crafty she loves, now she's into making the jewellery. Probably does it better than I do now, she's a bit like Bettie she can do all the big ones [bracelets on a loom]. (Jacqueline)

Jacqueline said that she 'loved' being an assistant and maintains that it was a 'lifeline' to her whilst she was imprisoned. She saw it as a unique opportunity to explore her creative interests. Jacqueline wanted the responsibility and liked being with other women, especially those with similar creative interests or those that she could support. She discusses the importance of being able to shift focus onto something else/ pre-occupying her mind. She also comments on the physical environment of the art room and how this took her away from the 'prison' environment.



(Left) Figure 40: Crocheted blanket, 2013.

(Right) Figure 41: Selection of handmade cards, 2013-2014.



Figure 42: Crocheted cushion, 2013.

I was always into my sewing, I did my embroidery and my cross stitch and stuff like that. For me that was my outlet when I was at home so if I could have had that while I was in there it was something that was a bit more normal to me.

Cushions [making them] (fig 42) was a big thing you know it was nice, they [other women in prison] loved it, well I loved it. As I say it was probably one of the only things that got me through it [prison], having a bit of freedom to be creative. I think when you're in a place like that you need something you need an outlet. (Jacqueline)

Summary

It was important to present the women's stories in this way, as case studies and individual accounts. Their stories here show the women in their own light, expressing individuality and persona. All of the women have ownership over their own stories, their contributions and artwork. The data is presented here in light of the objectives of the project. In Chapter three it was explained that the main focus of this research would be to explore the relationship between arts engagement, positive identity formation and desistance. It was also discussed that the questions posed to participants would seek to determine a possible link between their experiences and Giordano et al's (2003) process of transformational reformation whilst considering concepts of a progressive identity linked to Archer's (2002) theory of social identity.

These interviews have exposed personal narrative and shifts in identity as well as increased personal growth arising from the responses that each participant has given. Participants have considered their experiences of prison retrospectively in relation to how they viewed themselves and the artwork that they produced at specific points in time.

I have concentrated on two facets of the data collection here, how the responses to interview questions correspond to the research question and support the theoretical framework and how the artwork articulates personal narrative and self-expression. In particular, there is a focus on what the artwork represents for the creator and the autonomy expedited when making it. There is also associated interest around the exhibition and interpretation of work by others. Discussion around artwork often

prompted a reaction of nostalgia for the individual and they were able to elaborate on their thought process and emotional attachment to a piece(s).

What came to light early on in the interviewing process and through ongoing contact with the participants was their eagerness to share experiences that I myself had been involved in or could relate to. This included prison art projects that I had facilitated or had been a part of. The process of interviewing became less of a question and answering session and more of a discussion and sharing of mutual experiences within a familiar context. Three of the women chose to use a pseudonym, as they felt comfortable in the knowledge that their identities would not be comprised. The other three women were content that a pseudonym would be assigned to them in order to protect their identity.

Chapter 5: Themes



Introduction

In this chapter I shall present my findings, but before that happens I outline my strategies for analysing my data and discuss dilemmas around representing others on the basis of accounts they have given of their experiences. A thematic trend analysis has been applied when identifying themes, consistencies and parallels found within the interview transcripts. From the data collected from interviews and exchanges with the six women study themes around self-expression, self-sufficiency and the pursuit of independence have emerged as dominant.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim using the audio recordings. Printed copies of each transcript were carefully studied and annotated in a process of coding and

identifying common themes and similarities between wording/phrases used and experiences (see appendix eight: example of participant Bettie's interview transcript). Key elements of each text were highlighted and explored in relation to the methodology; appendix nine demonstrates how this process was initially undertaken. By creating an 'ideas board', establishing themes and linking them to explore overarching concepts revealed indicators for desistance and identify formation emerging.

Representing the individual

Participants rarely have a voice when it comes to interpreting data and deciding what to include or exclude or how to draw connections between individuals account (Roed 2012:63). Although themes have emerged through the use of particular words and phrases each woman has been able to share their story as an individual, making their way through prison in their own way.

This research was intended to give a voice to six marginalised women, enabling them to articulate their own experiences through art during a difficult and private period in their life. Making the distinction that they were all individuals whilst drawing comparisons and correlations between their responses in order to circumnavigate the research questions was a difficult concept to decipher. Interpreting the data needed disseminating in such a way that was sensitive to the premise of individuality and personal narrative. There is a responsibility to the women of this study to diarise their story in the best possible way and to convey the experiences shared within the art room in a way that extends beyond a sequencing of events.

Themes

Despite the initial shock of being received into custody for the first time all of the women were unified in their mindset and determination to secure work or activity as soon as possible. They all desired work within the art room and wanted to pursue creative activities, viewing it as a preferable option to other outlets available to them in the prison. The desire to make and produce artefacts is shared by each of the women. They suggest that being able to participate in an activity that will absorb their time, keep their mind occupied and focused on something that will produce a worthwhile or aesthetically pleasing outcome was of great importance to them.

One participant described in detail the absorption of time and stimulating of the mind through a large sculptural piece whilst in the art room. The scale of the project suggests a shift of focus and attention that sees the maker concentrate their time on a specific task for self-gratification, i.e. the reward of the finished outcome.

Comments made by Shaye such as *'I did not want the lesson to end, I just wanted to continue'* and *'when I went back to my cell all I could think about was returning to class the next day to continue with my work'* present themselves as crucial in understanding the psyche of the individual participant. Poignant themes around motivation, self worth, confidence, control and ownership have also emerged from the data.

Control and the quest for self-sufficiency

The use of the word 'control' has been referred to several times by the women in different contexts when describing prison life. There is the feeling of having little

control over decision making and the reality that life outside of prison may be out of control due to an individual's incarceration and removal from the family home.

There is also the hopefulness of being in control of what is being produced in terms of artwork and being able to keep it. The maker of art also has control in terms of self-expression, subject matter and what she wants to convey to her audience.

Disciplinary institutions such as prisons create a mechanism of control. Foucault (1995) described the mental torture that prisoners in a modernized prison system endured at the hands of the state in order to control:

The body now serves as an instrument or intermediary: if one intervenes upon it to imprison it, or to make it work, it is in order to deprive the individual of a liberty that is regarded both as a right and as property. The body, according to this penalty, is caught up in a system of constraints and privations, obligations and prohibitions. Physical pain, the pain of the body itself, is no longer the constituent element of the penalty. From being an art of unbearable sensations punishment has become an economy of suspended rights.

(Foucault 1995:11)

The women speak about the confinements of their cells and how this would often affect their mood, commenting that they did not want to spend long periods there. Although Foucault (1995) refers to confinement as a 'lenient' method of correction in a historical context of punishment and physical torture, he acknowledged that the body is still in submission. The ability to move around the art room freely and create a space in which to work with access to a range of materials and equipment was important to the women. There is a level of trust that distinguishes the art room from other places within the prison such as the wings or cells. As a facilitator of several of the projects that the women discuss, I encouraged participants to work on self-governed projects in silos or within practice groups in the art room. Women had access to a range of resources, selecting and using materials and equipment is

particularly rewarding as it creates a sense of order and discipline that we as agents administer as a 'free person'.

I had freedom to walk around the art room, especially after I became a worker and later assistant in the art room, then I had more freedom to enter the storerooms and cupboards.

I worked independently on my own pieces of artwork alongside working as part of a team on certain given projects. I was able to access the materials, resources and equipment that I needed to complete projects. (Susanne)

The individual selects what they need, how it will be used and in what quantity, much like how we would shop in a supermarket or choose the materials needed to decorate a house. What might seem insignificant in every day life is magnified in prison and this small act of decisiveness can support a lengthy quest to assert oneself in a bid for self-sufficiency.

The women suggest that their engagement in the arts went a long way towards keeping them sane, pre-occupied and focused.

I don't know if the piece [discussing a specific painting] conveys to others how I was feeling, but I know that all of the emotions that I was feeling at that time went into this piece. Making it really helped me to release those emotions and helped me to stay in control of my sanity on that day. (Susanne)

The desire to spend time outside of their cell purposefully was key to the self-monitoring of their own wellbeing. Prolific statements such as: '*the art room was a haven*' and '*a lifesaver*' have been used by the women. These are not usually the characteristics associated with facilities within a prison, however, the art room was able to create an alternative provision and subsequently have a profound affect on the women. Absorption in a creative task or activity provided escapism and the physical environment was also able to facilitate this for the women.

The concept of flow

Each woman has described the hours of concentration and attention to detail that went into the making of artwork and pieces of jewellery whilst in prison. This included working on a single piece solidly for days on end and working through the night to complete a piece of work. The satisfaction that came from such practice can be likened to that of 'flow', a psychological theory of the immersion into creative practice that brings about happiness and satisfaction within the creator.

The making of art is known to induce the experience of flow as a form of optimal experience producing quality of life enhancement through feelings of psychological growth, enhanced life and wellbeing (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). Research has also found that by being in a meditative-like state through the art process, clients are not able to deal with highly traumatic material, but the resolving of these issues in imagery allows for insight and personal growth (Fenner et al. 2009).

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) theorised that people can find genuine satisfaction when being in what he considered to be 'flow'. They are described as being in a constant state of engagement, usually through absorption in a creative activity. The theory is that happiness does not simply happen; instead it is cultivated by the individual who sets themselves goals and challenges so that they can facilitate a sense of 'forgetting oneself'. In modern culture this could be termed as being 'in the zone'. Csikszentmihalyi's work is important because he focused his early study of the concept of flow around artists due to his interests in painting. He claimed that at times the act of creating and engaging in creative or artistic activity seemed to be more important than the finished artefact itself.

Certainly for the women in this study the concept of: *keeping busy, active and occupied* appears to be just as important as the outcomes of creative practice. The fact that they were able to engage in activity that would demand their time and concentration is complimentary to time spent away from their cells. They each expressed the enjoyment they received from creative activities and interests and the learning of new skills. Enjoyment, in fact, can be considered a turning point for change. Enjoyment can be linked with the struggle to achieve an outcome of which the individual can be proud of. On the other hand enjoyment can relate to taking part in something that is different from the challenging routine-associated with the mundane-nature of prison. Most importantly, both enjoyment and achievement facilitate engagement (Bilby et al. 2013:51).

Ownership

‘Dispossession enforces rules through personality’s raw material, possessions, that are either physical objects, ‘periodic searches and confiscations of accumulated personal property reinforce property dispossession’; or immaterial, “perhaps the most significant of these possessions is not physical at all, one’s full name; whatever one is thereafter called, loss of one’s name can be a great mortification of the self’

(Goffman 2007:31)

When considering ownership as an integral theme to this research, possessions are key. Possessions in prison can offer a much needed link to the outside world through their sentiment and originality. A sense of past retained and brought about by the acquiring of possessions is essential to a sense of self. Belk (1990) articulates this notion:

The self extends not only into the present material environment, but extends forward and backward in time. Possessions can be a rich repository of our past and act as stimuli for intentional as well as

unintentional recollections. While few of us undertake as comprehensive a life history review as past, our memories constitute our lives; they are us. We fervently believe that our past is accumulated somewhere among the material artifacts our lives have touched--in our homes, our museums, and our cities. And we hope that if these objects can only be made to reveal their secrets, they will reveal the meanings and mystery of ourselves and our lives.

(Belk 1990:670)

Verduzco et al (2011) describe this conceptualisation of possessions contributing to an individual's identity and sense of self in the context of a women's prison:

Whenever there was less chance of acquiring possessions [in prison], a richer sense regarding personal belongings was found. Hence, working, listening to music, the utilising of select spaces in certain ways, and, even situations like gazing into the stars, involve this wider sense of personal belongings in the common goal of enduring prison.

(Verduzco et al. 2011:185)

As a result of their study in a Mexican women's prison Verduzco et al (2011) were able to ascertain the role of personal belongings and possessions in building a prison subculture that is present in the everyday life of inmates as a way of tactically ameliorating a hostile environment that tends to erode personality. This has presented as a prominent and pertinent theme within this research among the six women. Each has described the role and positioning of possessions in their day-to-day life in prison in a quest for agency and a desire to retain a sense of self.

Initially people arrive into institutions with their own possessions, their own lifestyle, or their own 'presenting culture' which will be eventually modified or taken away by a series of institutionalised rituals with the purpose of producing at large, an *inmate* (Goffman 2007:31). Each woman in this thesis mentions ownership in terms being able to possess items, including things that they had made during their imprisonment and keeping them in their cells. Buying items in prison is equally as important. In an environment designed to take away and punish through depravity

of freedom, belongings, choice and ownership of personal effects are central to prison life. The physical space of a woman's cell is a small inhibited area that many others before have both inhabited and adorned with personal effects, therefore it is vitally important for its occupant to make the space their own for however long they are residing there.

The churn of inhabitants in any one cell can detract from the personal element in regards to individual identity and being able to leave one's mark on a physical space. Some women will only reside in a cell for weeks at a time, for others it may be months and during any sentence it is likely that women will move cells at least once. This can prove difficult when attempting to create a sense of self in a temporary space, a space inhabited by others in the same situation before you and in the knowledge that the space is intended for another immediately upon their departure. Making a 'home' for oneself whilst incarcerated was an overwhelmingly important aspect of prison life for each woman. Access to materials, equipment, making claim to their living space-for however long-was crucial to the women and how they were able make sense of their surroundings.

Inside the confines of prison aspects of daily life can be magnified due to the inhibited and imposed conditions leading to a disconnection with reality. This was something highlighted by each woman when describing personal effects and why they were held in such high regard when they may otherwise have been insignificant objects on the outside world. Bonnie describes this heightened sense of magnification:

I think in there [prison] everything was really magnified. And it's almost like you're in a world within a world and that world is obviously just people that can't go anywhere else and that becomes your world.
(Bonnie)

The opportunity to acquire greater ownership of possessions and be able to make those items is key to the enjoyment, satisfaction and fulfilment that the art room brought about. The ability to take items from the room, create things and be expressive with materials created a harmonious environment. It was a place where the women could come and engage with their creative side and create a sense of belonging through the items they made.

The decorating of cells for each woman extended to the displaying of artwork or craft items on shelves or walls, such items were often created in the art room. Ownership extends to items, materials and equipment that the women were permitted to take back to their cells and continued with the work started in the art room. This act of trust and responsibility given when taking items away from the secure and controlled area of the art room in itself was important to the women and each acknowledged and appreciated this leap of faith awarded by the teaching staff. This act itself was powerful as it allowed greater ownership over an item since trust was granted and an acknowledgment from a subsidiary of the structural form-the prison staff-that the individual had rights to that object. From the institutional perspective, allowing possessions represents a control strategy that gives inmates certain autonomy (Verduzco et al. 2011:197).

These items of self-expression and creativity became integral to the journey of the incarcerated women; they indicate various facets of the individual's personality and place beyond the prison walls. Many pieces of work were often inspired by loved ones, events or interests of the women. Displaying such items and artworks in their cells meant that a link to the outside world and former self-through cherished persons and memories-could be maintained through visual reminders. Belk (1990)

describes this notion of the extended self as a transcendence of the immediate confines of the body incorporating one's identity and objects from the imposed physical environment.

This conception implies that the self is spatially enlarged by such extensions; that our possessions make us bigger people (Belk 1990). This is especially true when considering the positioning of possessions for the incarcerated and how they are able to interpret their own identities through the limited agency that they can acquire and the structural impositions of the environment, in this instance the cell. Makowski (1998) suggests that the normative space of prison can be transformed into a differentiated space appropriated by inmates. In the context of this research the differentiated capability of appropriation and action through silence and discretion allowed women to confer personal meaning to each space, in a constant struggle with its institutional use (Makowski 1998:7).

The artworks made by the women that become possessions are often personal, sentimental in nature with meaningful purpose to the individual. Subject matter often encompasses central themes of: family, friends, memories, facets of life outside of prison, comforting aspects of life and so on. Certainly in the case of Shaye, artwork is often created in response to a moment in time reminiscent of memories of before prison which evoke feelings of how she came to offend. When considering her 'blood Mountain' sculpture Shaye describes the biographical nature of the piece and the emotional undertaking:

I would say it were about my life, really, before prison and since really. The path, the journey that I came on to get here, just everything there in this sculpture really, it were really large, I mean the piece, when I was making it it was just more and more feelings and experiences going into it. I just remember these turtles on the beach and I kept thinking about these turtles when I were making it and this is what the mountain

represents, but when I were making it it kind of turned into what has happened since and being in prison, what that's like. (Shaye)

Taking ownership of producing such a personal artwork meant that Shaye could share her experiences with others through visual representation. She would ultimately have possession over the physical artefact but it was open to interpretation from the viewer, of which she hoped she had portrayed enough to convey her memories and messages:

It [the sculpture] were my life and I invited people to come and play, like make their way around it like a board game. (Shaye)

In contrast Bettie would respond to the preferences of her childrens' tastes and requests in a quest to make the ultimate personal gift that would best display her love and adoration. Susanne's work would often transcribe how she felt in that moment in an attempt to make sense of her situation and the power she had over it, which was largely to understand and discuss it through the medium of art.

The role of possessions in these cases are not only to act as ballast to keep us stable, but to serve as familiar transitional objects that, like the child's security blanket, provide us a sense of support as we confront an uncertain future (Belk 1990).

The importance of physical space within a prison environment does not only extend to one's dwelling, i.e. the cell or landing where the incarcerated individual eats and sleeps. Verduzco et al. (2011) also discovered that physical spaces in prison were constantly mentioned while discussing personal belongings, as well as practices such as making or acquiring artefacts. All six women discuss their workspace within the art room and what this meant to them in terms of ownership, trust and space in which to focus and explore through various mediums of art. Each woman took up their own space within the room whether it was a desk, a wall, set of

drawers or cupboard. Bonnie and Kay speak about their specific seat around a table of jewellery workers and why this was of value to them.

In the case of Shaye, many of her possessions have been taken away, especially art making materials and finished artefacts that she has made during her imprisonment. She has suffered loss of autonomy over what she makes and is able to keep in her cell due to her length of sentence and the volume of items she owns. Just as those received into custody are restricted to what they can and cannot have during their sentence and feel the initial loss of their personal effects Shaye continues to routinely experience loss and confiscation as punishment and as a by-product of being a lifer. Shaye's personal effects are vital to her yet she feels that they are being used as a punitive measure to control her behaviour and as a mechanism of her management as a lifer. This places her in a differing position from the rest of the women in this study as they seemingly had greater autonomy over their sentence and possessions as their stay in HMP Sale was temporary.

Verduzco et al. (2011) describe dispossession as being used as a strategy that reminds the inmates at every step that it is not the institution that takes things away, but rather their own present acts, and the reasons that initially brought them to prison. As Shaye views it the prison is punishing her through restricting her access to possessions in a ploy to control her through a lengthy sentence where she has already collected a significant amount of personal effects. Knowing that these items form her day-to-day existence within HMP Sale Shaye presents the notion that prison staff have misused their power in order to remove them from her possession. When an institution grants certain privileges, or allows possessions, it does it as part of a control strategy that has an impact on the subculture because it puts some

inmates in a higher position than others, those that have things that the others do not. Dispossession gives possessions a special meaning within the subculture; they acquire new value through scarcity, founded on the institutional ability of taking away (Verduzco et al. 2011:197).

Escapism and distraction

As established in the literature review arts practice in prison has often been used as means of distraction and escapism from the realities of prison through creative means. This is compounded by the contributions of the women with all of them reporting that the arts activity (in many different forms-jewellery making, sewing, knitting, painting, crafting) they had engaged in had been a crucial escape to the normality and realities of prison life. All six women had associated the prison experience, including the elements of time and captivity with increase in low mood, anguish and anxiety, exacerbated by separation from loved ones and isolation.

Dean and Field (2003) suggested that at best art in prison is a hobby to keep people occupied and whilst they did not consider there to be an intrinsic value for both individuals and the community, individuals can take comfort in the occupying of a troubled mind. The women in this study talk about how grateful, thankful and fortunate they were to have access to the arts during the trauma of imprisonment and separation from loved ones. In this sense an activity considered as a 'hobby' was a powerful tool in keeping an individual focused with a greater sense of purpose.

This prominent theme unites the women unanimously; they all speak about the ways in which their arts practice, whether in their cell or in the art room kept their mind occupied during difficult periods of imprisonment. When discussing life since prison Susanne, Bettie and Jacqueline also express feelings of escapism through their continued arts practice:

Being in the art room kept me focused during the day and the Women's Institute kept me focused during the evenings, kept me sane. Basically what it did was kept me sane, yeah. (Bettie)

At times I felt really in touch with myself, with my feelings, it [art] helped me to focus in the moment, to stop the obsessive mind. (Susanne)

It [the art room] was somewhere to go and kind of get lost. (Bonnie)

Caulfield (2015) captured the benefits and supportive and absorbing nature of arts projects with women offenders after participants reported feelings of being 'free', 'at ease' and 'feeling at home'. All of those emotions are associated with escapism and being cultivated by an activity that promotes a carefree attitude induced by enjoyable physical activity. Similarly, shifting attention away from feelings of stress, worry and anxiety over situations and circumstance out of their control in likened to that of the experiences and responses of the sample group in this thesis:

'I've got children and the project took my mind off worrying about them as I was concentrating and enjoying it.'

(Female arts participant in Caulfield 2015:6)

In her study of a women's prison, Giallombardo (1966) explained that women create a separate universe from which they create a greater sense of self. Whereas in everyday life an individual would routinely engage in activities in a lighthearted sense to bring about escapism, (widely described as hobbies and pastimes) similar undertakings by the women in this study were much more prolific in terms of their psychological wellbeing and empowerment. The sense of being taken to a place of

inner peace and sanctuary even for short periods acted as a vital crutch for each woman to a great extent.

Connection to loved ones through art

'When they come I have their presents ready for them. It's my way of showing them that I love them, and I tell them that I'm working to make myself a better future'.

(Prisoner participant in study by Verduzco et al. 2011:193)

The ability to give a gift to a loved one on a visit has been described as the most powerful display of love by four of the women. The restriction of physical contact, spending time together, limited phone calls and so on created a barrier that the women sought to overcome by what they could produce in the way of gifts. These gifts acted as permanent reminders of the love felt for the recipient (often a child) in the absence of contact as a display of affection. In her time spent observing the behaviours of the visiting hall and shop at a correctional facility in America Comfort (2007) explains the importance of the artefact or 'gift' that is often presented to an inmate's loved one, especially when handcrafted. A shop in the visits facility where handmade items could be given out to and sold to visitors of the inmates acted as the conduit for physical affection in place of actual physical contact.

Similarly sending drawings and sketches in the post was just as prolific in maintaining the bond between mother and child. Bettie would often send drawings in the post to her children and for Susanne—who was imprisoned in another country from where her son resided—writing about her artwork provided comfort to both her and her child. Susanne did not receive any visits during her sentence, her only method of verbal contact was the limited phone calls she could make and therefore

writing and drawing was crucial to maintaining contact and keeping a connection to her outside world. As a prominent topic for her letter writing, discussing the artwork she made became a way of providing comfort to her son, reassuring him that she was coping with imprisonment.

Often when recalling her prison experience Susanne describes how the loss of power and the control from others affected her relationships and caused her to seek other means of restoring much needed contact:

The inability to communicate with my son except for letters and one short phone call each weekend for which I had to spend the whole of my wages on for only ten minutes.

My son was able to view my artwork when I returned home. He was impressed. (Susanne)

Upon her release Susanne was able to show her work to her son, the pieces that she took away from prison with her are a retrospective of the time that she spent away from him and representative of her emotional prison journey. She was finally able to share this with him in visual form upon her release following much telephone conversation regarding her arts practice. This witnesses a powerful act referring to the natural bond between the woman and her child in the most simplistic of terms.

Friendships

What is overwhelmingly clear from this study and the responses provided by all of the women is the importance and relevance of friendships and relationships formed in prison, often extending beyond release. The bonds formed are spoken about with such significance and poignancy when discussing their sentence and those influential in supporting their journey, often referred to as 'survival'. When the five released women in this study returned home from prison it was important for them

to re-connect and keep in contact with women still incarcerated at HMP Sale as well as those living back in the community. All six women spoke about at least one particular relationship that they formed with a fellow inmate in prison during their interview, namely borne out of the art room and the working dynamic and partnerships formed there.

Greer (2000) describes these relationships as emotional bonds between parties who may otherwise not have met in everyday life. In her study of the nature of relationships formed between female inmates in a US prison she found that incarcerated women will share at least one significant bond with another. Although they perceive the manipulative and dysfunctional, most respondents will still not prevent themselves from developing friendships (Greer 2000:451). This is the case with the women in this study, they discuss the value of forming non-judgemental relationships with fellow women that can relate to their situation and provide them friendship and companionship through a time of emotional turmoil.

Giallombardo (1966) suggested that women in prison experience a need to form relatively close familial relationships, even in a correctional facility due to previous socialisation experiences and gender expectations. He refers to these as 'kinship relationships'. Kinship networks might also help provide a larger group of individuals from whom the inmate could receive emotional support and socialisation into the role of prison inmate (Giallombardo 1966: 185):

The family group in the female prison is singularly suited to meet the internalized cultural expectations of the female role. It serves the social, psychological, and physiological needs of the female inmates.

(Giallombardo 1966:185)

Boudin and Smith (2007) acknowledged that women in prison are survivors of lives in which they made good and bad choices and they are survivors in prison, too. Women typically care for each other in prison by offering support via a listening ear, teaching each other things, making sure a birthday is celebrated or braiding each other's hair (Boudin & Smith 2007:251).

The physical environment is crucial here to the forming and lasting testament of relationships between the women. Factions and group friendships within the art room are mentioned on several occasions by the women. This is particularly true for those who worked predominantly as jewellery workers and had a space around the jewellery table. Bettie, Bonnie and Kay all had what they described as coveted roles within the art room through the ability to be part of the jewellery department and have a space at the jewellery table. When discussing the importance of their role and sitting at the jewellery table the three women mention the significance of being afforded trust and being able to access equipment, materials, keys to cupboards etc. Being granted access to areas within the room that is otherwise out of bounds to other inmates was widely recognised by the women.

Similarly Jacqueline and Susanne both speak about being part of a team, having interaction with the women at the jewellery table and feeling included in something that appeared exclusive in respect of proving one's position and trustworthiness within the art room. Being in this position of trust was overwhelmingly vital for their positive experiences as employees in the art room, making their way in prison and spending their time constructively and constructing as a means of survival. Once initiated into this special corner of the room that is described in detail by each woman they could appreciate having ownership, status and companionship through

a shared high regard for work ethic and workmanship. The frequent sharing of ideas, designs, patterns and so on was commonplace as was the input of each other's contributions and feedback.

There are particularly close bonds between Bettie and Jacqueline and Bonnie and Kay. These friendships began whilst working in the art room and sharing workspaces, spending several hours a day with each other designing and making artwork, jewellery and other craft items together. It was through mutual respect and appreciation for each other's talents and abilities that when speaking about each other they do so with such adoration for their capabilities in skills such as drawing and painting, jewellery making and sewing and so on. However, there is often the element of '*she is so better at this than me* [artforms]'. The gifts that Bettie and Jacqueline have made for each other both inside and outside of prison have been meaningful and cherished by the receiver, often drawing inspiration from their interests, tastes, preference of colour and so on. On one occasion Bettie produced two drawings in response to Jacqueline's favourite actor and she then created a Celtic themed piece of jewellery to Bettie's taste. The bond between Bonnie and Kay was so strong that Kay was even prepared to foster Bonnie's child whilst she was in prison.

Assuming a role in the subculture

Just as explained through the previous common emerging themes, the roles and the responsibilities of the women within the art room were crucial to the survival strategy and coping mechanism for each woman as she dealt with her sentence. The role they acquired as a result was both individually and collectively powerful and one of both heightened trust and autonomy, primarily the role of classroom assistant. This group of women and others that formed part of their inner circle within the art room with an extension to the residential block created a subculture within the prison. Pérez's (2000) research of subcultures and emerging groups within Latin American correctional facilities found there to be an alternate structure run by inmates. One that was parallel to the prison authorities; founded on the informality that in some cases rules the life within prisons. He defines this alternate structure as being:

An informal organisation run exclusively by the inmates that, in accordance with social and cultural parameters from outside the prison, takes precedence over the formal organisation in the flow of everyday prison life, reproducing more or less spontaneously an already existing organisational structure.

(Pérez 2000:41-43)

The subculture exists because the women share common principles and interests concerning the way they dealt with their sentence and previous offending behaviour to some extent. Pérez (2000) describes these as common norms or the same criteria of morality, the same language, and socializations that are grounded within normative parameters. The women were able to differentiate themselves from those who chose not to engage in the regime and rehabilitative programmes-self governed or otherwise-and seek to get the most out of their ordeal with they would later view as an *experience*. This created a hierarchical structure within HMP Sale which saw positive behaviour reinforced and greater opportunity created through

individual job roles and responsibilities within the art room. Bonnie clearly defines herself as someone with focus using the comparison to repeat offenders whom she encountered:

I'm not your stereotypical prisoner, I don't believe I am. But I think yeah, I was always looking for a way, in my mind when I was in there [prison] I was always thinking 'what am I gonna do?' 'What is gonna make me a living?' (Bonnie)

There is a fine line here-described by some of the women-between understanding the relationship with those disengaged from the regime for reasons beyond their control and those that wished to disrupt and deter others from it. It is clear that the women in this study were able to identify those who were open and appreciative to the support they could provide and those who were not ready to do so. In this way the subculture had the ability to organise and regulate itself, establishing an informal structure that has its own rules. This was especially true of the ordering and seating plan of the jewellery workers table as previously discussed. However, by their own admission Bonnie, Kay and Bettie described a potential culture of elitism that existed as a result of their roles within the art room. Bettie reflected on her role within the room in the context of how other inmates viewed her:

I was always very aware that even though that was my job [classroom assistant], I was still one of them and I would always be viewed as one of them or they would call me... '*officer no keys*'.

I think I only ever had two people have a go at me and that diffused quite quickly. And then you know and then sometime you find sometimes you find yourself stepping in where I never had before and try and diffuse the situation. (Bettie)

More often than not the driving force behind the motivations of this self determined group would be loved ones, namely children and with this in mind a mothering role or identity could be ascertained from their responses and function within the art room. This concept itself takes on its own subculture operating within the art room and the wider institution. That is that the women were operating outside of their norm of being another inmate serving a sentence alongside many others. Acting as

a motherly figure was beneficial to the recipient and self-serving for the individual herself.

What is evident from the responses of five of the six women is the desire to take on a greater level of responsibility within both the art room and wider prison environment in any capacity. This may be associated with their primary role in life-as described by each of them-as a mother. Each spoke about how their motherhood was an integral part of their existence in prison and their underlying driving force for change and consistency throughout their sentence. All five described some form of motherly role or instinct that they displayed at some point during their sentence and in particular within the art room. Jacqueline discussed a level of fulfilment from this role as she felt most at ease when taking on the role as a senior, supporting or guiding figure to other women, especially younger women. During her interview she focused heavily on a young woman in her early twenties who received a life sentence as Jacqueline was preparing for release:

[it] had it's [prison] bad times but it had a lot of good times, but I think like with me, I mean I do this now, I tend to focus on other people so like when Anna came in [to prison] I helped her and making sure she was ok.
(Jacqueline)

Bartollas and Van Warner (2000) suggested that such emotional attachment and the need to act as a mother figure relates to the need to fill a void created by separation from loved ones. When sharing a cell with Anna Jacqueline ensured that she was included in a group where she could be supported and was receptive of to her needs:

We did get away with like blue murder we the amount of stuff we had, like Anna, the amount of stuff she had in her cell was unbelievable, pens and paper, but for her that was a good thing because she didn't sleep. It kept her calm, because if she couldn't sleep she's just do that [make art].
(Jacqueline)

Welsh (2013) referred to such relationships between women in prison as being pseudofamilies where older women took on the role as mother figures and to a certain extent providers. These women often restore internal order with approval and-in some instances-at the request of the institution in order to control other inmates, usually the less mature and more volatile (Welsh 2013, Fox 1984). In the case of Jacqueline she was housed with Anna in order to keep a watchful eye over an otherwise young vulnerable woman with complex mental health needs.

Identifying that Anna had problems sleeping, with the support of the prison staff Jacqueline was able to support her throughout the night by allowing her a light on and access to arts materials in order to keep her mind from wandering to distressing thoughts. Four years on from her release Jacqueline continues her relationship with Anna through writing letters and visiting her in person.

The feeling of needed to be needed, being able to support another through their ordeal or simply just be a shoulder to cry on was important for the five women with the sixth, Shaye, also commenting on her relationships within the art room:

Being in that room were really important, I was like part of the team and I got on with all girls and girls could come and talk to me, I ain't got that now. (Shaye)

Where Bettie had previously worked as a classroom assistant in a school prior to her imprisonment she was attracted to the art room and the role of assistant. She was able to use her previous knowledge and experience of supporting others' learning and being creative with positive effect, creating a greater sense of purpose. The role she was able to assume was one with a sense of some familiarity, playing to her strengths and interests. This role was situated in a place where she could engage in artistic practice and experience a sense of belonging and she subsequently remain in the art room for the duration of her sentence. As a mother

with young children she was equipped to deal conflict with her calm exterior and personality, successfully carrying out the role of assistant.

Similarly, Bonnie spoke about how she was able to operate successfully within her role as assistant through her ability to read situations and remain a calming influence. As a mother of a young child that she was separated from she wanted to display to her daughter that she was engaging in meaningful activity and described her job within the prison-albeit the child was unaware of the implication of prison-was what was keeping them apart. Bonnie assumed a role within the prison with the sole purpose of proving to her family that she was capable of building a responsible and purposeful life upon her release that would benefit her and her children. Whilst working in the art room she was forced to grapple with her opinions and values that she held prior to incarceration as she made sense of her surroundings and the diverse nature of the people she came into contact with. Bonnie had a clear and self-directed mandate from early on in her sentence that she would serve her time conductively and in the interests of her child and unborn child. By her own admission she does not believe that she would have had the same motivation to change her life and sustain those changes had she not had her children to consider:

I think that had it not been for my children, I could have easily fallen apart.

I'm not one of these people who says 'oh my god I committed a crime and therefore I'll never get a job', but..I had young children, I knew what my offence was, it restricted me somewhat and in my mind I was always thinking 'what can I do as my own business?' on my release. (Bonnie)

Tolerance and empathy

There is a sense of 'time out' described by the women, time away from the aftermath of imprisonment. This time has been described by all six women as a means of exploring their own emotions without distraction as they have quite simply been forced to do so through incarceration. This emotional journey of discovery into the inner self and what each individual outwardly portrays has been surprising for the women at times as they discuss how their prison experience has made them a much better person. Bonnie, Bettie, Jacqueline and Susanne describe a healing process that started during their imprisonment and has continued upon their release. Coming to terms with their imprisonment and starting to rebuild a positive identity has been largely achieved through the relationships formed in HMP Sale . Each woman has engaged in reflexive activity that has happened holistically as a result of greater tolerance of others, empathy towards others and focus on what is positivity and negatively portrayed to others.

All six women have talked extensively about other women and staff members that they met during their time spent at HMP Sale and how these relationships have affected their lives and recovery. They have all met women that they may never otherwise have met and have been both shocked and inspired by their experiences. Bonnie, Bettie, Jacqueline and Susanne all spoke about women who touched their lives in some way in prison and admitted that they possibly would not have interacted with them outside of prison. Initially shocked by their life stories they embraced the companionship with a sense of empathy and understanding for their personal circumstances leading to a better understanding of offending behaviour in others.

Bonnie, Bettie, Jacqueline and Susanne had been involved with the Criminal Justice System before and therefore coming in contact with those withdrawing from drugs, affected by abuse, struggling with mental health issues and giving up crime were rare to non-existent. Nevertheless they grew close to certain women worst affected by the system that created a tolerance and acceptance of others when understanding their behaviours and actions whilst in prison. The women were able to view individual situations and scenarios in context, with compassion and understanding. In turn this supported the women in evaluating and critically reviewing their own situations and the circumstances surrounding both their offence and eventual release from prison.

In their study of the relationship between the arts and human development Catterall et al. (1999) found that when students in their sample group engaged in a series of art programmes many displayed greater tolerance towards indifference among peer groups attributed to the nature of activities explored. Students appeared to 'get along' where they once had indifference showing empathy and tolerance, brought together by obscurity.

Similarly Dorothy Heathcote (1964-2011), a respected academic in the area of drama education (see 'Mantle of the Expert' in Drama for Learning 1994) considered arts education more widely to be an opportunity to put oneself into another's shoes. She believed that when taking on a role one labours to understand how a peer may conceptualise and enact his or her role in relation to their background and experiences, or to comprehend how his or her character is understood by others. Heathcote and Bolton (1994) considered that empathy for others was a possible or likely outcome of the dramatic experience', i.e. embarking

on a journey with another through creativity. As with drama programmes, working within the art room was loaded with potential opportunities to interact with others that one might not ordinarily gravitate towards. Heathcote and Bolton (1994) found indicators related to tolerance and empathy included an emphasis on race and inclusion. These results were often witnessed in an accumulation of case studies where individuals opened up about their feelings to performing and learning alongside them. A greater understanding of others' beliefs, cultures and backgrounds was observed as a result of critically evaluating their own self through collaboration and freedom of expression. This relates to what is being described here by the participant group.

For Bonnie, who considered herself to be dismissive of people who seemingly did not help themselves in her eyes and turned to repeat offending became more accepting of how easy it may be for some women to turn to crime:

If I didn't have my children..I could see how easy it could be for some women [turn to/continue to commit crime]. (Bonnie)

Being judgemental of others and their actions prompted her to think about her own life choices and how others could potentially judge her. In the absence of her family who disconnected with her to a certain extent due to her imprisonment Bonnie turned to others for support and forged some very close relationships, especially with fellow participant Kay. She describes the other women as 'family' and the intensity of the relationships formed in a relatively short space of time:

I think that when you don't have anyone you kinda make a family in there and people say to you 'oh you've only known this person for a short time', but you're in a big brother environment. And if you look at the TV show, people on Big Brother say 'feels like I've known them for ages' and it's been like three weeks. It feels like a year. (Bonnie)

Living and working with other women in close proximity for long periods dictated that all six of the women would get to know others however it was whilst working in

the art room that the women really engaged with diverse groups. Whilst housed on their residential areas all six women were grouped by sentence, status (i.e. basic, enhanced etc.) and in the instance of Shaye her behaviour and offence. This dictated with whom the women would eat and socialise with at weekends and in the evening. Once in the art room the women came into contact with those living on the detox wing and those in segregation. A number of young women, referred to as YOs (young offenders) aged 18-21 would also attend the art room but did not necessarily reside where each of the six women did.

Whilst in prison Bonnie had time to reflect on how she came across to others in terms of her behaviour and facets of her personality that could have a negative impact. This was largely due to what she had witnessed from others in prison and since her release, forcing her to look at herself in a critical manner. When discussing her excessive drinking prior to her imprisonment imposed abstinence provided the clarity needed to evaluate reasons for drinking heavily and the motivation to stop.

I used to be a really bad drunk, I used to have a lot of issues, underlying issues and I think I dealt with everything. It's like now, I go out and I see the same traits in other people. (Bonnie)

Similarly, being in the prison environment where swearing and profanity was commonplace Bonnie stopped this lifelong trait of hers upon realisation of how she may come across to others. Witnessing the behaviour of others and considering her language in front of her children prompted something in her to stop swearing and continue to do so when released. She is of the mindset that her prison experience was the catalyst for change rather than pre-existing personality traits that would enable her to deal with her imprisonment:

I don't think I always was though ['level-headed']. I don't know if I was always that way. That's what I'm saying, I think a lot of it came from

having that time to reflect, having that time to think about the way I used to be, the way I used to do things. (Bonnie)

Susanne also felt as if she had been on a journey with some of the other women during her sentence, compelling her to re-evaluate how she looks at her own world and wider society. She was able to see a great deal of good in others and show compassion whilst being appreciative of what she had in life compared to some. Tolerance and empathy are again phrases that Susanne uses when describing her interaction and relationship with other women whilst in prison and when thinking about her time spent back in the community. What would routinely affect her in relation to other's disruptive and disrespectful behaviour compelled her to understand her peers:

Working then [in the art room] allowed me to see more clearly how I am with other people, although at that time I had an undiagnosed untreated hyper thyroid gland which caused me to over react to situations, to be anxious and stressed out really easily even get angry. But still I learnt to deal with others in a more accepting way, it was hard to be halfway, not a teacher yet not a part of the class. When some people stole from right under my eyes and also being destructive, I had to let go of a lot of my own judgmental mind.

I just had to deal with people [in prison] and I learnt to deal with others in a more accepting way. (Susanne)

Susanne suggests that she is more 'accepting' of behaviours displayed by others and that this has made her thankful regarding her own situation. On one occasion she cried when another woman stole materials from a cupboard that had been left open in the art room. She thought about how she could not control everything in the room and that she had to accept a person's motivations for doing this. Some women had very different motivations and stories.

The experience [being in prison] and this year [after release] has made me appreciate what I've got in my life so much more and I'm glad to be here and trying to enjoy the moment. (Susanne)

Summary



Figure 43: The Hierarchy of Flow, illustration courtesy of Peter Blake (see appendix 7).

Figure 43 demonstrates how a 'hierarchy of flow' has formed as a collective and overarching theme when encompassing the component themes. As articulated in the illustration, flow as the prominent theme, the 'desired effect' or eventually of arts practice directly correlates to the other seven themes. Connection is made in this effect, assuming that subsequent themes are precursors to the state of mind induced by sensation and feelings of flow. In order to reach this meditative like state of total immersion in the activity for the purposes of pleasure, a basis to reach this state must apply.

This ability to engage one's brain and physical sense in an all-consuming activity can allow for the positive release of flow. Engaging with something for no other reason other than one of pure enjoyment and the self proclaimed quest for escapism is reflective of the women's experience of art making. Distraction, escapism, concentration, control, self-sufficiency are all words and phrases used by the women when considering an ideal or desired effect either intended to or actually achieved through their arts practice in prison. For Susanne, Bettie, Bonnie and Jacqueline less emphasis was placed on the final outcome of the artwork in favour of the activity itself and the process of 'making' that could provide the desired psychological effect. This impact being the replacement emotions that art could bring about in terms of having a focus, a distraction and sense of purpose other than being part of an institutionalised regime.

Shaye and Kay explored the outcome of creative practice and their accumulation of possessions was fast paced in an effort to create several artefacts. Both women benefitting from the satisfaction such activity could provide. For Shaye especially, collecting items, materials and gaining general access to practice art is integral to her sustaining feelings of flow. The notion of ownership and the control are

opposed in this study in relation to the responses and viewpoint of women. On the one hand there is a need to engage in activity and on the other there is the need to solely produce. Whatever the motivation, the aim of achieving a state of gratification consistent with that of induced flow is present.

Chapter 6: Discussion



Introduction

This study set out to explore the relationship between the practice of art in prison and the accumulation and acquisition of agency among a group of women incarcerated at the same custodial establishment for varying periods between 2011 and 2014. The methodology set out to establish whether a definitive and transformational link could be made between Archer's (2003) social identity theory of categorising powers of internal deliberations with Giordano et al's (2002) transformational reformation theory using arts practice as the conduit. In this final

chapter I will discuss my findings in relation to this ideology and suggest ways in which arts practice in prison has actively enhanced the lives of the women involved in this study.

Although this sample is relatively small, the contributions from the women are invaluable in establishing a prominent link between arts practice as a coping strategy for imprisonment and identity formation as a somewhat subconscious rehabilitative tool. What is also prominent is the understanding of the effect of imprisonment on the incarcerated individual and the ways in which arts practice can support the desistance process.

In chapter two the consideration of previous studies and theorists began to link the practice of arts with secondary desistance and moving away from crime. It came as no surprise that all six women involved in the study experienced the benefits of arts practice in prison in terms of occupying time, body and mind. Just as the literature heavily suggests keeping busy, engaging in a creative and enjoyable activity occupies the wandering mind of the incarcerated soul. However this study strived to delve further into how such factors and subsidiary benefits of conducive activity- often referred to as the development of 'soft skills'-supported the healing and rehabilitative process that often leads to desistance.

It should be made clear that desistance has been discussed and evidenced in a broader sense in this thesis through the presence of rebuilding lives and acceptance over past criminality. It does not necessarily consider desistance in the common sense of giving up crime as a prolific and repeat offender. These women are not so much as moving away from criminality as an ongoing life choice but

instead desisting from a previous self that lead them to offend and as a result of prison they wished to disassociate with certain facets of their former life.

All six women were accepting of their circumstances and the unique and complex situations that led to their offending and imprisonment. The process of interviewing was self-reflective with little focus on self-pity and self-loathing. A level of acceptance in regards to events before prison and what was in the realms of their control is evident through reflection and considering life before the dramatic intervention of prison. Each woman reflected on the early days of imprisonment and the ways in which they dealt with the shock and emotional turmoil of the situation. Those who were able to mentally prepare themselves for prison were better equipped for dealing with their situation and take charge of it under daunting and imposed regimes and restrictions. Certainly for Bonnie, the prominent meta-reflexive among the group, planning and executing a coping strategy was key to how she dealt with her sentence with a view to preparing for release. Similarly the other five women were consistent in suggesting that they knew they had to take something from the experience of imprisonment that would support them either further down the line in their sentence or upon release.

Indicators for desistance

The principal aim of the research was to establish indicators for desistance that could in turn establish a link to positive identity formation. The findings definitively demonstrates strides towards an enhanced higher order thinking self-identification indicative of that with the desisting individual. Although the extent of which-such a transformational undertaking-for each woman varied. Shaye's desistance story

differs dramatically to Bonnie's for instance. Whereas Shaye's hinderance for progression and change gravitates around her imprisonment, the intervention was the turning point and opportunity. Maruna (2006) theorises this in the respect that where products of a problem are part of the solution of a problem, the process gains credibility. It also becomes less discontinuous, less authoritarian, and more participatory in nature.

For Bonnie specifically (and Bettie and Jacqueline to a certain extent) imprisonment was presented as an extreme and abstract way of dealing with problems and non-conducive or destructive on the outside, prior to imprisonment. She was indeed able to look at things with clarity and take the positives from the situation and reflect on what may have occurred if she was not incarcerated. The intervention of imprisonment allowed the women-to differing extents-to take stock of their lives and potentially shelter themselves from the negativity and devastation that would have inevitably been left for them.

Maruna (2006) considered how ex-offenders were able to make good in the face of widespread social stigma, limited career opportunities, and social exclusion. What is evident from the findings of this research is that acceptance over one's situation and the ability to become stronger, more self-sufficient and confident as a result has been integral to recovery and re-integration. The motivations on the outside and to a certain extent the rewards and opportunities presented inside of prison also are central to finding inner strength in order to move forward. This self-sufficiency is a powerful tool when formulating a process for re-integration back into society, earning the respect and understanding of others. The ability to 'put things right', 'right wrongs' and put others first commands greater respect from those who may

judge or hinder the progression of an otherwise misunderstood ex-offender attempting to rebuild their life after incarceration.

In Chapter three I outlined the four-stage transformational reformation theory as described by Giordano et al (2003). When closely analysing the emerging desistance stories of the sample group the narratives gave context to where each woman was situated in the process with indication of how they may progress to the latter stages referred to as 'tertiary desistance'.

Transformational reformation: moving through the process

Giordano et al (2002) explain that a general openness to change by itself is often insufficient in an individual's quest to turn their life around. They conclude that exposure to a hook and one's attitude towards it are important elements of successful change. There is what is referred to as extremely manipulated hooks such as being offered a job or being re-housed and emotional hooks such as the motivation for change provided by relationships formed and existing loved ones. (Giordano et al. 2002). These motivations are what Giordano et al (2002) consider to be 'hooks for change', described as the secondary phase in their process of transformational reformation. As the most crucial stage in the desistance process, the hooks act as an important role in fostering transformation of the individual through exercising greater reflexivity. This may be consistent to reconciliation with loved ones, the forming of a new relationship or the real prospect of a life enhancing opportunity.

The hook(s) require the individual to make a particular sort of cognitive connection consistent with that of higher order thinking or enhanced reflexivity. This being when the individual is encouraged to consider the effect of said hook(s) on their current and future life and contemplate the benefits of sustaining the relationships, engaging in the activity (if applicable) and so on. Researchers such as Sampson and Laub (1993, 1998) highlighted the importance of marital attachment, relationships, family and job stability as key factors associated with change among a group of ex-offenders. All of the women in the study revealed that family and friend relationships both before, during and after imprisonment (where applicable) were key in their lives. Giordano et al (2002) acknowledged in their study of desisting females that traditional hooks such as careers and employment often lacked prominence. Instead, they saw a spike in the hooks reported in the form of the role of the spouse or more prominently the mother. This is symptomatic of this study with these particular women.

Maintaining and improving relationships was often integral to how the women could progress or mentality detach from the situation (i.e. imprisonment), whether that was dealing with day-to-day prison life or seeking a level of support upon release. Becoming more accepting of their imprisonment led to greater self desensitisation to the stigma of unwanted interest in their offending and subsequent incarceration. The shock of incarceration became less of a focus for the women as they began to turn thinking towards coping mechanisms and plans for release.

The magnitude of imprisonment started to wain in most instances in order for a new-albeit imposed and diverted-path in life be exposed with the individual succumbing to it, influencing it through an assertion of agency and ultimately

embracing it. Through the maintenance of these key consistent relationships with certain people in their lives both inside and outside of prison they became key drivers in the unfolding desistance process that has been evident throughout the lives of the women here. Even where the process has identified as being halted, regressive or unclear at times, the women's narratives draw on common themes and denominators indicating that a process of change and possible reformation *is* or *has* taken place.

Bonnie and Bettie who spoke about their children extensively and how they acted as their main motivation for dealing with their situation in the way that they did. Both believed perception and action to be the most influential factor when maintaining positive relationships with children and resuming a function of 'mother' in their lives whilst incarcerated. Regaining credibility as a mother and member of society was highly important to them, this can also be observed through the narratives of Susanne, Jacqueline and Kay. Making children proud, sheltering them from further turmoil, confusion or embarrassment was paramount. The women identified these actions in prison to be what they could demonstrate as positive 'output'. Primarily this was what could be achieved through the medium of creativity and productivity.

With all five of the forementioned women actively embracing the employment and education available to them in HMP Sale each made a conscious effort to learn new skills, leading them to consider different options for employment and generating an income upon release. The concept of making something through a creative outlet(s) that ultimately another would want to wear or buy created a great sense of pride shared by their loved ones. Certainly for Bonnie and Bettie, it was established early on in their sentence that creative practice would play a central role to their

future and how they would eventually plan for their release. The acknowledgment of such is integral to their personal narrative.

The representation of self that is outwardly projected to loved ones is a documentation for how they have behaved and progressed as a prisoner. Whether or not this is an accurate representation of life for the incarcerated individual the intention is the same, that they are considered to be strong with the ability to deal with the situation. It is intended for the loved one to view them in the best possible light despite the circumstances. It has been widely suggested in this study that this may have been achieved through the activities that each woman engaged in whilst in prison.

The consistent motivation for the women was to return to their families, have greater access to children or/and have custody of them. For lifer Shaye a fond memory of a holiday location with a loved one was cherished in the hope that she may return there one day. A show in this positive behaviour demonstrates to custodial managers and decision makers such as prison governors, social workers, probation and resettlement workers and so on that the individual is committed to change. In thus doing so, faith is also restored to loved ones, indicating that the individual wants to 'make good' on promises made and does so by taking positive action. For the majority of the sample group the opportunity to actively involve them in their productivity through the distribution of handmade gifts of jewellery, drawings, cards and other craft items that were created in HMP Sale were of great importance. Giving out such items during prison visits were significantly special events for the women also.

Bonnie commented that giving out jewellery items that she had made to her three year old daughter was a way of explaining where she was, what she was doing and that she had a job, designing and making jewellery for others. As her daughter was very young at the time she needed to make sense of the separation and why she was visiting her mother in prison. This was a method of dealing with the emotional turmoil that both her and her child faced due to their separation, however due to Bonnie's commitment to her jewellery work she did not believe that she was being dishonest with her daughter.

The existing bond between mother and child was maintained during separation in the form of making gifts and artefacts to let the child know that the mother is thinking of them. In a position of helplessness both Bonnie and Bettie said that the act of making something and giving it their child was the only thing they could do to show an act of love beyond writing to them and phone calls as love and attention had gone into making the gift and they knew it would be treasured. For other women in the study such as Susanne and Kay who have older or grown up children, entry into competitions and displaying of artworks in exhibitions formed a similar desired effect. They were able to share information about their creative practice in a more descriptive way, creating a talking point and sense of pride between both parties.

Susanne was keen to inform her adult son of how her paintings had progressed whilst she was in prison, how they were received when exhibited in a gallery and was then keen to show him the actual paintings upon her release. It was part of this experience that he may be aware of her efforts and determination during that period when she was away from home, imprisoned in a different country without visitation. Providing regular updates about her creative activity and entry of artwork into

competitions through written and telephone contact with her son was a way for Susanne to communicate that she was coping and was remaining productive. Her maternal instinct was not to unduly worry her son.

Creating a replacement self

Giordano et al (2002) concentrate on the 'life story' or 'narrative' of the individual to evidence presence of desistance. The creation of a replacement self forms the tertiary stage of the desistance process when the individual presents a better version of their self. As discussed when considering hooks for change the women stated that making their loved ones proud and creating a self-sufficient persona was pivotal to their desire to change their lives or as a very minimum their outlook on life. Not being viewed as 'that' person anymore, the one that committed that crime, went to prison, was in the newspaper or brought shame to the community.

Although her offence and threat as determined by the institution was deemed to be non-conformative to the regular regime the intention for Shaye to create a replacement self was present in terms of establishing the activities she wished to engage in and the role she wished to assume as a long-term prisoner. The institution (HMP Sale) is instrumental in obstructing the desistance process here through an imposed and limiting regime. Whether punitive action (prolonged segregation) was taken as a necessary or overzealous precaution is irrelevant in determining whether Shaye's progression has been thwarted, the conclusion is straightforward, it has. In the absence of the most basic of needs in terms of rehabilitation, confiscation and loss of ownership and control, absence of contact

and the ability to form relationships with others has resulted in Shaye being disadvantaged.

Bonnie, Bettie and Susanne spoke extensively about how they felt that the experience of prison had created a better version of themselves. This had been widely achieved through greater understanding and tolerance of others and empathy towards indifferences. They had left prison with a sense of gratefulness for whom and what they had in their lives. The experience also created a mindfulness regarding opportunity upon release and how they might embrace it, largely concerned with heightened confidence and shifting patterns of self-perception. To some extent all six women reflected on a time when a positive and rewarding experience in prison-even if short lived-supported them with profound effect, allowing progression in some form or another. This was most apparent when experiencing a sense of routine and purpose associated with reality and normality specifically concerned with the creative activities that they engaged in.

Critical events and turning points

All six women described critical events in their prison experience, ranging from the distressing to the joyous in nature. Each profound event acted as a pinnacle in terms of turning points and milestones in the life of the otherwise disenfranchised prisoner searching for a sense of purpose and direction. Having been informed by her son that her home had burned down, Susanne began to channel her thoughts and emotions into painting. By expressing her feelings through her artwork she felt as if she would not further burden her son, instead she could appear strong and as if holding it together in prison during their separation. Not having her son or other

loved ones close by and able to visit dictated that Susanne's emotional adjustment to prison was substantial. Subsequent strategies for dealing with the ordeal through relentless soul searching following an initial period of shock brought about disbelief and self-loathing of her situation.

The relationships that she formed with others in HMP Sale by Susanne's own admission presented as a learning curve due to the complexity of the situation, having not experienced incarceration before or interacted with anyone that had been to prison before. Becoming more accepting and tolerant was something that the prison experience dictated she be in her eyes. Her involvement and interactions with other women in HMP Sale led to greater empathy and understanding of others' situations when dealing with her own which led to the revelation that she had underestimated her own strength and resilience.

Susanne encountered various obstacles during her sentence as she struggled to come to terms with imprisonment such as ill health, loss of control over possessions and her business, a court case and separation from her son. Although she spoke positively about growing in confidence and becoming stronger as a result of dealing with such strife and experiencing loss of control her real reflective journey happened upon her release. The ability to critically reflect on her prison experience away from the environment provided her with clarity and perspective and through her reflexivity was able to take the positives from her incarceration in some form.

Such seminal moments during Shaye's prison experience gravitate around the relationships that she forms with others and a sense of belonging that she is without otherwise. Being part of something, especially as part of a team, is important to

her. Shaye has been in HMP Sale for several years and stability of regime and relationships are vital in maintaining a sense of purpose. When working in the art room she had purpose and an established role within the prison that gave her responsibility where she had previously experienced feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness. Once this regime was removed from her and was restrictive in a way that reduced her position, creative activity and association with other women both her mood and sense of purpose deteriorated.

Giordano et al (2003) observed that the 'actor' (more specifically the prisoner *or* desisting person) creatively and selectively draws out on elements of the environment in order to affect significant life changes. Whether this was via an assumed role or forming a bond with another the desire among these women was to enact an ideal of self that would protect them from the environment. The significance of such would then in turn support their rationalisation when faced with the challenges of life after prison and coming to terms with their ordeal.

Creating a stronger and more confident version of oneself with the capacity to withstand negativity surrounding their imprisonment that created a divide in the family unit and caused uncertainty for the future was ultimately out of their physical control. This was largely due to their removal from the family home, instead, the women instead did what they could from prison in order to demonstrate that they could still assume the role of mother, partner, daughter etc. vicariously in prison. With this in mind, creating a replacement self may present as obsolete if a former self is favoured, however, the intervention of prison and separation from the former life dictates that a new self must be developed.

After their imprisonment it would have not been possible for any of the five released women to continue with life as they knew it before. Whether this meant geographical change, a new career or separation from a partner (all experienced to some extent by the released women), in order to respond to such life changing events the adoption of a replacement self would manifest naturally. The extent of this would inevitably depend on the influences and level of engagement in purposeful activity, i.e. the acquiring of new skills that would support a career change.

The work or study that they engaged in has purpose and meaning to the women and their loved ones. Often the act of giving through making items that could be given as presents was powerful in keeping the connection between a mother and their child through a sustained period of separation. The fact that a gift had been handmade with the recipient in mind also demonstrated the sheer love and emotion that could not be exercised through traditional means such as a birthday party, making a cake for instance, placing gifts under a Christmas tree and so on. These all being seminal moments in a child's life, were all forfeited by both parent and child as a result of incarceration.

The women also spoke of the conversation that could be generated between them and a loved one in terms of the gift(s) they had made, how it had been made, the time spent making them and so on. This was often a welcome distraction from having to discuss or be questioned about prison life in terms of the reality and myths surrounding imprisonment and loss of freedom. Again, this relates back to the desire of the woman to demonstrate to loved ones that she is doing 'ok' and that their efforts and anxieties should not be centred on worry around her imprisonment.

Instead, they should be proud that she is coping, has a plan for her release and is able to look after herself. She does not want to be viewed as helplessness, vulnerable or weak in any way as this is not their role, as a parent they could not be viewed as such.

Some of the women discuss the notion of 'keeping strong for my kids'. For Helen, Bettie, Susanne and Bonnie this was certainly important and finding work or something purposeful to engage in was crucial in those early days and as a coping mechanism that would sustain for the duration of their sentence. These women speak about the positive response that they receive from loved ones-in particular children-when they view artwork, discuss artwork, the projects they were involved in, competitions entered and exhibitions associated with and so on. These encounters act as testimony to the woman's efforts in prison and indicates to the loved one that their mother/partner/daughter had actually made good on their promises. It demonstrates that they had meant what they said, their actions were true and they are committed to change. Above all, the opinions, approval and trust from loved ones is paramount to the woman as she goes out of her way to gain and prove this.

This desire to control and assume the role of mother etc. was present even when the status quo had changed beyond that of their control i.e. separation through imprisonment. Sampson and Laub (1993) consider this to be the attachment bond by which the incarcerated individual engages in activity or creates a life for themselves whilst a prisoner to facilitate or exert responsibility that they once had as a mother for instance.

Motivation

Giordano et al (2003) acknowledge that such actions come from a much less contrived and influential place of personal gain. In the context of this study these women have posed their actions of influencing, monitoring and limiting the amount of hardship and emotional instability that their loved ones would have to face as a byproduct of their imprisonment by reducing the worry and anxiety incurred due to their situation through portraying-accurate or otherwise-an image of dealing with imprisonment effectively and conducive in terms of their release.

When discussing the art room and their place within it, their role and responsibility was of great importance and pride to each woman. Proving to loved ones that they would not revert back to old ways or put them through anything of that magnitude again was not an option. In most instances it was the approval and forgiveness of children that was of most importance. Even where probation officers, social workers and others were involved in the destination of the women and convincing these people of change and being able to quantify that change kept them returning to prison, loved ones opinions mattered more. This was not described by any of the women as key drivers for their emotional or psychological rehabilitation or intervention to make good during or after their sentence. It is a key premise that highly invested actors will develop a strong stance in conformity and will not wish to jeopardise what they have (Giordano et al 2003:1056). Certainly in case of Bonnie, who acknowledged the lure of money was appealing, it was not the motivational pull in contrast to her children.

Giordano et al (2003) found that desisting individuals needed a minimum level of resources to draw on in order to begin such a transformational process. When such

individuals experience setbacks and rejection and are not able to progress in the speed or fashion as they had originally anticipated they will inevitably need to call on the support of those dearest to them as motivation. Instead, the transformational power that exists here with the majority of these women is the power of keeping such precious relationships moving forward and in these instances they remain as most powerful and dominant in the reformation process.

The manner in which the arts and being part of a community in HMP Sale -allowing for creativity and bonds between women-acted as a healing mechanism for a group of otherwise disenfranchised individuals. Art has ultimately played a key part in the individual reformation stories of five of the six women with the other woman (still incarcerated) reflecting on her experiences in the art room in a positive way.

Shaye is the one woman in this study who can be seen to have regressed in her quest to make good, survive prison or make sense of her situation in any real and meaningful way through her role within the prison environment and the activities that she engages in. As a lifer considering the prospect of life without parole and the bleaker scenario of actually dying in prison Shaye has contemplated about her imprisonment beyond that of finding activities to pass the time. Shaye's perspective differs substantially to that of the others in the study. Her life becomes not so much about filling time in order to complete her sentence as quickly as possible and perhaps learning something in the interim, it requires a long-term strategy for engagement. When life means life, the work, study and people that one forms relationships with in prison become more to do with creating a replacement life drawing on the surroundings. Just as one may do in society in order to serve a purpose as an individual, whether it is to be a mother, have a career or simply to pay the bills.

As a lifer the individual holds the opportunities available to them in prison dear as they are essential to the notion of a replacement life, they do not need to present a self for approval outside of prison because their life revolves around the one that they have created. In this respect Giordano et al (2003) accept that the stability of a good job for instance will have a positive impact on the desisting individual. They recognise that the product of all these dynamic processes is enhanced internalised control and perhaps the most important type of cognitive transformation. Similarly, Shaye's priorities have shifted in life in terms of a workable resolution for rehabilitation, consciously or otherwise.

Transformation and regression

When interviewing the women, what was most compelling was the description of self-transformation in some form or another. Admittedly for Shaye her transformation had actually been witness to a decline in her progression as an incarcerated soul who would otherwise be seeking or working towards rehabilitation. Or in the instance that the physical aspect and nature of incarceration dictated that she could not be fully rehabilitated until her release, the continuing journey therewith she would make as a lifer rather than a desister. Essentially prison is her life, her home and her future. However, the barrier to her progression is a simplistic one, it is imprisonment itself, the confinement and imposed sanctions and categorisation that she has received. Being incarcerated has meant that Shaye's quest for agency, self-identity formation and personal growth have been impeded by confiscation and restriction. She has been deprived of the activities and

possessions that she holds most dear as a punitive measure and by means of control and discipline.

The practice of art for Shaye has been the most stable and consistent thing in her life since she has been in prison, now spanning more than ten years. Even when she was in segregation for five years she regularly had access to arts materials and created work during that period in the absence of education or employment. This enabled her to work creatively on a daily basis and count the work that she produced among her personal possessions.

Prior to the assessment that recommend Shaye be permitted to attend the art room her cell door not to be opened without the presence of between four and six officers. She had not been able to associate with the majority of the prison population at that time or move around the establishment in what is commonly referred to as 'free flow' (free movement of prisoners around a prison during periods of unlock). When Shaye did move around the prison what is known to be a 'freeze' would commence whereby all other prisoners and staff would not be able to leave their location so as not to come into contact with her. Such close supervision had resulted in limited interaction with others and little enrichment or purposeful activity in her life.

The most consistent aspect of Shaye's life at that time was arts practice. Following her risk assessment in 2014 that enabled her attend education, she was subsequently housed with the general prison population. When attending the art room in the first instance Shaye was accompanied by a custody officer until it was deemed that she was responsible enough and the circumstances were considered safe enough for her to attend unaccompanied. A certain amount of trust as well as autonomy over her own learning was placed in her hands that allowed her to

progress at one stage. The extent of her progression was immense in the sense that she had seemingly gone from not being able to come into contact with others-other prisoners-or have access to tools and equipment such as scissors and so on to a position where she had become a classroom assistant in the art room.

Shaye had her own working space within the art room with access to a range of materials, tools and equipment; she regularly supervised and supported other women routinely attending the room to complete art courses. She gained such a level of trust from staff and senior management that she began to complete commissions and her work was displayed around the prison, including a number of paintings for the refurbishment of the staff canteen. Along with this she contributed heavily to the social enterprise jewellery business ran exclusively by the women, designing and making items for women and staff to buy. This later progressed to running her own greetings card making facility where she took orders and processed payments. This clearly demonstrates the progression she had made when integrating with the general prison population and engaging in purposeful activity that ultimately provided positive enrichment conducive to her rehabilitation and management as a restricted status prisoner.

Shaye recalls this as being at her most happiest and contented whilst being incarcerated. Having her own space, being creative and being with the other women were fundamental in providing Shaye with purpose and direction. Accepted as 'one of the team' Shaye grew close to many of the women working in the art room, being part of the 'cage girls' was important to her. This small group of women sat in a space that for all intents and purposes was a large cage like structure containing sewing machines and textile facilities. Although she had not been widely

accepted by the women on the jewellery table and did not gain a space there she was accepted by another group and felt heavily affiliated to these women (fig 46).

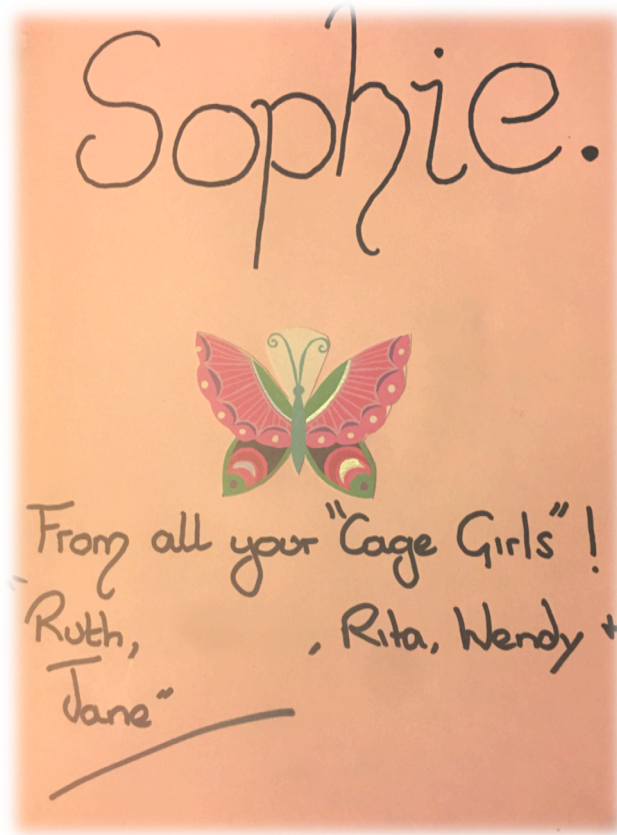


Figure 46: The 'cage girls' card, from Shaye and others, (Shaye's real name has been removed) 2014.

Shaye's position and function in the art room was a pivotal moment in her incarceration and acceptance over her situation and lengthy sentence. She had made great strides in her quest to be accepted into the mainstream prison regime and access opportunity as many of her peers did. She had gained trust from staff and had made friends with a number of other women. The trust demonstrated extended to Shaye having her own space, desk and drawers of materials.

A year after her appointment as classroom assistant in the art room Shaye forfeited her position and a series of events dictated that she was to be expelled from the room permanently. Reports of apparent hoarding of arts materials in her cell and an alleged threat of violence towards a staff member led to senior management taking

the decision to remove her from the work location and place her under close supervision once again. This alleged hoarding of materials could be understood in terms of Shaye's length of sentence and situation surrounding this in relation to establishing a replacement life to be lived out in prison as a lifer. It is likely that she will accumulate more items than most in prison as her physical space, in particular her cell, becomes her home.

As beings in wider society one routinely collects possessions and produce an agentic footprint for oneself, prisoners start this process over in prison. Shaye's 'hoarding' of physical artifacts in this manner is indicative of how she would behave as a prisoner with little indication of a release date having been incarcerated for several years already. Her quest for agency is greater dispositioned than any other woman in this study due to her ongoing plight of indefinite incarceration. Shaye desired what most women in prison already had access to upon their reception, what she had been deprived of having spent so many years in segregation, access to education, the opportunity to form relationships and to be creative. When discussing her experiences of the art room, mixing with other women and becoming socially accepted as someone who could be trusted was a great accomplishment for Shaye.

Shaye's continuing quest for agency as a prisoner (far reaching than any other woman in the study) extends to her desire to be treated with equal opportunity. The demands she places on herself and the structural institution of HMP Sale are concerned with access to activities that make her life bearable and give her some sort of hope in life. In the most simplistic of terms these are the basic necessities

for survival in prison in relation to mental wellbeing and conducive to a path of rehabilitation and reconciliation.

Shaye's prison narrative also differs dramatically from the released women in the study due to her seeking an alternative identity from that of which she displayed as a free woman. Whereas Bettie, Kay, Bonnie, Susanne and Jacqueline all drew on facets and roles from their previous lives-relating to work and parental responsibilities-to create a somewhat mirrored pseudo-identity, Shaye concentrated her efforts on building an alternate life based on a previous prison existence.

There is some evidence here to suggest that Shaye is displaying certain indicators of secondary desistance as she has admitted that her criminality and behaviour would eventually lead to her imprisonment. Her acceptance over this eventuality enabled her to internalise a strategy for dealing with incarceration when being handed down a life sentence. It may simply be the case then that due to her categorisation as a restricted status prisoner and implied threat to security as determined by a group of healthcare and offender management professionals her desistance journey cannot be facilitated as an incarcerated desister. Her assertion for agency must be formulated and established as a precursor to all four stages of the continuing desistance process. As Shaye is powerless over her situation at present and with the withdrawal of all she holds dear in prison in terms of possession and activity, acquiring agency is becoming more and more difficult. The long-term effects of such may result in a regressive identity formation, thus resulting in an unrealistic aim of achieving a state of desistance.

Inclination of a regressive identity was prevalent at the time of Shaye's offending and initial imprisonment. A glimpse at her life shortly before sentencing displays

signs of autonomous reflexivity even if the manner in which it manifested itself led to incarceration. Decision-making surrounding her prolific and sustained offending she considers to have been in full control and had understanding over her actions, fully aware and prepared for the subsequent consequences. This self-preservation would later support her when coming to terms with the length of sentence handed down to her in the first instance.

This premise is significant when attempting to understand Shaye's past and establishing a timeline for the causal changes and deficit in her reflexive capacity. Shaye undoubtedly had greater power over her offending, apprehension and imprisonment exercising greater autonomous thought and action than she did her sentence planning and management. Once she had become part of the system and was categorised in the way that she was (an RS prisoner) it became impossible for her to establish an autonomous reflexive identity as a lifer housed in segregation. A segregated restricted regime is the most imposing of regimes for any prisoner for purposes of positive identity formation associated with desistance and rehabilitative benefits. Nor does it signify that she has been able to engage in any meaningful meta-reflexivity to support the continuing and formative stages of desistance.

Schlanger (2010) states that even those entering long-term prison segregation in a relatively healthy psychological state frequently experience damage to their mental health. Believing them not to be an effective deterrent for misbehaviour of the segregated individual research carried out by the Prison Reform Trust echo this sentiment in what confidently confirms Shaye's experience of exclusion:

Segregation units combine social isolation, reduced sensory stimulation and inactivity. Coupled with their mission statement, the challenges

posed by some of the prisoners housed in them, and the increased controls imposed on prisoners, these characteristics make them potentially very toxic environments.

(Edgar & Shalev 2010:69)

This research has demonstrated that although there is apparent prominent reflexive activity and pre-determined categorisation within an individual's established personality attributed with Archer's (2002) model of reflexivity, it is possible for individuals to experience significant shifts in identity. This has been evident for each woman involved in the study derived from an analysis of reflexive ability and the willingness to share this intimate undertaking.

Reflexivity in action

In Chapter three I described each mode of Margaret Archer's (2003) four reflexive identities, each linked to and determined by the individual's powers of internal deliberations. To some extent all four reflexive identities could be distinguished among the six women. It was not surprising to establish that Shaye-as an incarcerated participant-could be viewed as a fractured reflexive. The other five women displayed and experienced greater levels of autonomy concerned with higher order thinking, closely associated with meta-reflexivity.

When considering the eventuality of shifts in reflexive identity this study conforms to the argument and ideology presented in the methodology chapter. It is indeed possible for one not to remain situated in the same mode of reflexivity, thus experiencing a progressive and emerging identity *or* regressive identity that is ever changing with significant life events and interventions through the life course. Not to support such a notion would result in no prospect of desistance or rehabilitation.

For the women involved in this study the life-changing event of imprisonment has proved to be a major factor in their perceived shifts in identity.

To understand the desistance and how fundamental shifts in the character of the individual allow the process to take hold and bring about the desired change identity must be determined, even where it is seen to fluctuate. I identify with Archer's (2002) model of reflexivity and how this indeed represents an ideal in wider society that as beings we gravitate towards one mode of reflexivity or another as determined by agential influences and structural pulls. Incarcerated persons and their freedom of choice (quest for agency) verses imposed sanction (structural confines) is an entirely different affair. The women in this study have simply not been able to function as members of society whilst incarcerated souls and returning to a previous existence has been an overwhelming and somewhat impossible task.

Those released and affected by the Criminal Justice System are indeed characterised not only by others, but by themselves also as they attempt to create a phantom identity in an ever shifting environment. All six women created a sense of premeditated and self-monitored soul searching as a result of creative activity. Largely through subject matter, both inwardly and outwardly projected, experiences and situations were deeply reflected on whether intentionally or otherwise. Creative engagement in various forms provided control and purpose with all six women reporting to have made art for the purposes of self-discovery, comfort and/or exploration associated with emotion and trauma to some extent.

As mentioned, the findings of this study support the ideology and concept of persons 'moving' through reflexive identities as part of a process of enhanced

identity formation. This can also be witnessed in the form of regression, whereby an individual can be seen to lose their ability to take positive or autonomous action as a result of structural restriction and inhibition. Archer's (2003) reflexive identities are useful and relevant when attempting to understand how life events, nature, nurture, the acquiring and acquisition of agency and structural confinement can shape and determine an individual's decision-making ability. With this in mind the reposition of the individual in an entirely different cultural context such as prison can allow for greater mental deliberation as well as a reduction in the opportunity for meta-reflection, where an individual experiences psychological liberation.

This study demonstrates that shifts in reflexive identity can be imposed on this individual through lack of choice, opportunity and power of decision making leading to self-doubt, episodes of depression and to some extent resentment resulting in less meaningful and conducive internal conversation and deliberation. The greater the emotions of helplessness (as experienced by Shaye and Susanne throughout their sentences and Jacqueline, Kay and Bettie in their initial days of imprisonment), the greater the reliance on others leading to less autonomous decision-making synonymous with traits of fractured reflexives.

None of the six women identified as being fractured reflexives prior to their imprisonment, even where poor decision-making and the negative influence had contributed to or resulted in their offending. Some of the women were able to stabilise their reflexive identity during their imprisonment through the activities they were able to engage in and the relationships they formed whilst others saw dramatic and significant shifts in theirs. There are three key indicators of this:

1. Bonnie's ability to retain a greater sense of self attributed to the responsibility of pregnancy and motherhood in prison that supported her actions both prior to imprisonment and upon release. The intervention of creative activity alongside the life changing nature of her incarceration as a punitive measure enabled her to practice new modes of reflexivity. Identifying this process herself can be viewed as meta-reflexivity.
2. Shifts in modes of reflexivity seen as positive strides as predominately experienced and narrated by Susanne, Bettie, Bonnie and Jacqueline. In particular the forming of relationships allowing for greater tolerance, resilience and understanding. In turn, creating internalised debate regarding one's own situation, responsibilities and position within wider society.
3. The revelation from Bonnie, Bettie and Jacqueline that upon reflection and critical analysis of the situations that led to their offending imprisonment was a welcome and necessary intervention.

Meta-reflexivity

For each woman with the exception of Shaye the initial point of imprisonment following their sentencing was the considered to be the worst event in their life. The fear and emotional attachment of the act of being sent to prison was seen to be the eventuality that would be their demise when in actual fact the circumstances surrounding their imprisonment were far greater and damaging. Though varying in their times of 'recovery' and acceptance over the initial shock of imprisonment and entering uncharted territory in their life courses, the women could have each have gone down a path of self-pity, self-loathing and hopelessness in place of the survival mechanism 'kicking in'.

Prison provided a less cluttered space for internal deliberation leading to a greater acceptance and tolerance over their feelings and emotions towards the impact of their offending and imprisonment. Comments so profound as to suggest that prison was a better alternative than freedom at a certain point in time can only be

associated with meta-reflexivity which Susanne, Jacqueline and Bonnie were engaged in at some stage to varying degrees during their incarceration. Away from the chaotic situations surrounding their offending they were able to critically reflect.

In order to work towards a mode of meta-reflexivity which Archer (2003) describes the social order as being problematised rather than internalised or normalised. She believes that in order to reach this desired mental state of enhanced and higher order critical thinking (whether consciously or sub-consciously) significant time and events must lapse in the lifespan with self-socialisation in trans-modernity being a life-long undertaking.

Meta-reflexives often experience critical detachment from their natal context and it is this withdrawal that prompts the individual to dissociate with the social norms that they were born into and subsequently seek an alternate lifestyle. This replacement lifestyle is often regarded as adopting a more purposeful existence that not only makes a positive contribution to society but also provides sensibility and peace of mind. Similarly, the process can be attributed to desistance theory and the very premise of how rehabilitation works.

Whilst this is not the case for all incarcerated persons, in the instance of Bonnie her self-proclaimed emancipation took place in the space of just over a year. The major determining factor for change here is the actual prison experience. What this had meant for her family and future prospects brought about significant change and powers of internal deliberation for a more meaningful and advantageous outcome. As a meta-reflexive the individual is able to think consequentially, which draws direct parallels to the desisting individual or certainly one who had turned their back on criminality. This can also be said of the autonomous reflexives among the group

(and communicate reflexives to a lesser extent) who were able to consider the positives they took away from their imprisonment. However an element of mistrust and disillusionment with their experience of the Criminal Justice System had prevented them from making any substantial personal advancement as serving prisoners or even shortly after their release. As a result they were unable to fully immerse themselves in meaningful internal dialogue that would disassociate the negatives and take more positives from the complexity of the experience of prison. Five years on from her release Susanne is unable to move on from some of the emotions felt as a result of her experience.

There is identification of internal deliberation to a most unprecedented extent through rigorous debate and analytical thought process among some of the women that demonstrates meta-reflexivity. The ability to say 'I am a better person' as a result of incarceration is a most prolific statement and unequivocally vital for what would traditionally be described as the pinnacle of rehabilitation of the desisting individual where the 'change' can be witnessed through self-exclamation.

Archer (2003) states that meta-reflexivity is associated with those exercising higher order thinking skills in response to significant life experience and therefore tend to be older persons. This would suggest that individuals do not necessarily remain in a fixed mode of reflexivity determined by their identity and powers of decision making arising from internal deliberations. Through the outcomes of this research, (specific to the case studies of the sample group) significant shifts in reflexive identity may otherwise be considered as gradual occurrences over a substantial period of time. To conclude, an intervention with the magnitude for self reflection and reinvention as profound as imprisonment is a credible indicator for the

appropriation of an enhanced reflexive identity capable of internal deliberation relating to meta-reflexivity.

With this in mind there is strong consideration and indication for sustained internal deliberation and decision-making associated with a move from fractured reflexivity to meta-reflexivity arising from sententious intervention(s). Where the series of life changing events is momentous, an accelerated rate by which the individual develops a heightened sense of being in terms of reflexivity can prevail.

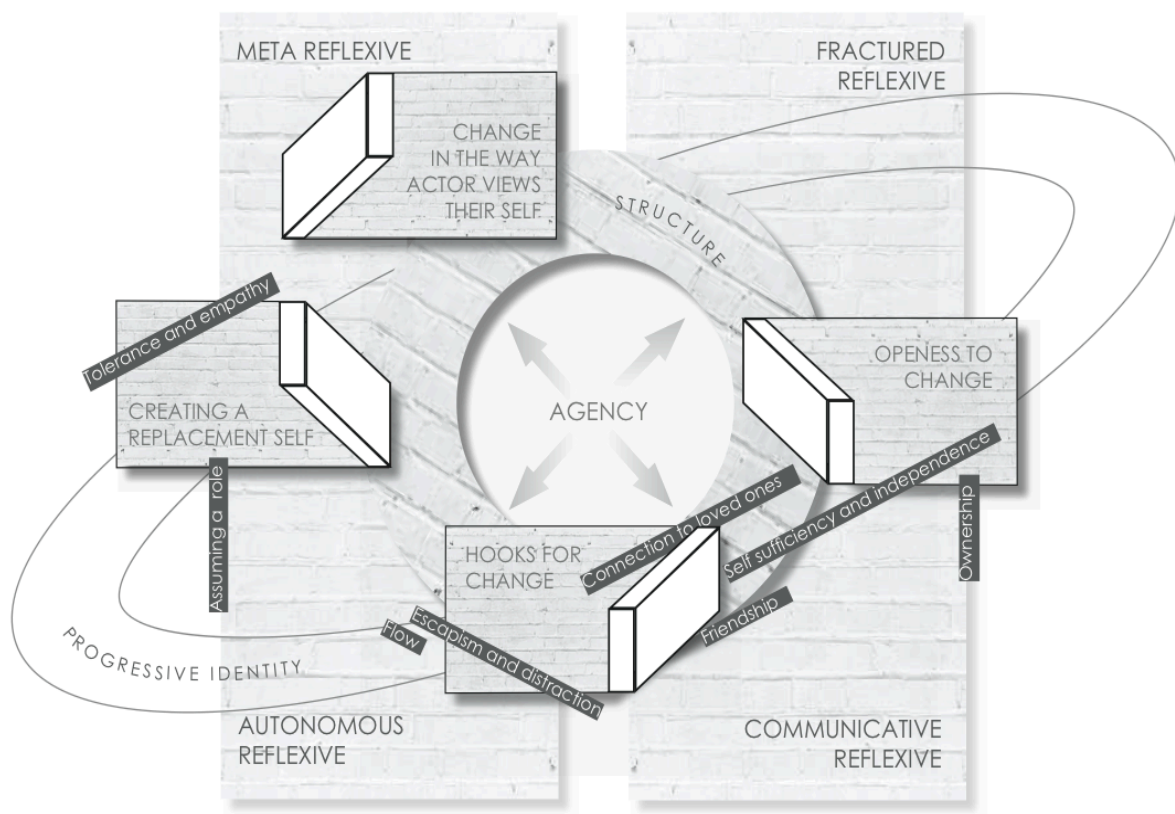


Figure 47: Model of reflexivity/desistance theory in action, illustration courtesy of Peter Blake (see appendix 7).

The model of reflexivity/desistance theory in action (fig 47) demonstrates the relationship between Archer's (2003) modes of reflexivity and Giordano et al's (2002) theory of transformational reformation. Evidence and presence of the eight prominent themes are tracked against their relevance when an individual attempts-

either consciously or subconsciously-to restore or attain agency as a process of self-healing or reformation. This is whereby the desister looks for hooks, indicators and motivations that will bring about positive change or simply make sense of a situation. In this instance it is through a creative engagement that excites and captures the imagination that provokes change.

The links made between the themes and stages within the desistance process as well as community with a certain reflexive identity are done so with appropriation of role and persona. This translates to how the woman describes her creative experience and what it has meant for her ability to bring about change. Seemingly the most prolific activity in terms of frequency and intensity can be viewed when formulating and realising hooks for change and how they manifest. In particular, common themes around flow, escapism, bonds with loved ones and ownership can be closely associated to this secondary stage of desistance. This congregating of themes as articulated in the illustration describes the gradual and subconscious move from a communicative reflexive to an autonomous reflexive. In this respect the engagement of arts activity as described by each woman sees a shift in action and power over one's situation as the practice (art) creates welcome ties to the outside world, loved ones and opportunities.

Whilst these ties-*or the hooks*-can be firmly viewed as communicative ties in respect of the expectations placed on the woman by others and her reliance on others, their function also enables greater levels of autonomous activity. As the creative activity progresses, confidence in ability and skill is witnessed by the maker herself as well as those around her resulting in the emergence of a replacement self. Less and less reliance is placed on others to provide knowledge, insight and in

some instances permission to take action in creative form. The woman is able to review her own creative output and think analytically and critically about its impact on her life. Such a reflexive undertaking shows great maturity in meta-reflexivity. A woman reflecting in such a way on her creation of a replacement self can almost certainly be seen to be practising some level of meta-reflexivity, even where her complete persona would not fit squarely into this identity in its entirety as defined by Archer (2003, 2012):

‘Meta-reflexivity’ can be about the trivial or the profound, just as any act of ‘primary’ reflexivity may be. Equally those who do not necessarily possess a ‘profundity’, which sets them apart other people.

(Archer 2003:255)

It is necessary to look further to discover what in addition serves to differentiate the internal conversation of the ‘meta-reflexive’ from that of the ‘autonomous reflexive’. The answer seems to lie with agential rather than structural features. Specifically, it relates to the kinds of projects which subjects pursue.

(Archer 2003:265)

Art: the catalyst

What has remained consistent throughout the conducting and analysing of the literature review, formation of the methodology and subsequent undertaking of the research is the conception of absorption in physical creative activity. The women all share a common interest, they all sought out creative activity as a means of keeping busy. This concept of keeping busy, occupying time and having some sort of outlet as a prisoner is key to underpinning and understanding the unique relationship between conscious activity and the healing process consistent with desistance. ‘I must keep my mind busy’, ‘I must keep my mind active’, a seemingly simple mantra is presented here however, it is worth considering in a more formative sense in relation to desistance. Being in the cell, in a room with bars and the locks on the

doors and so on references back to Foucault (1979) and his tortured mind and soul. The punitive function of imprisonment being not only concerned with the physical captivity of the individual but the toll on the psychological realm is what is most referred to in this study.

Imposed incarceration forces the person to review their mental stability and capability and there is questioning around knowing ones' own mind and decision-making capacity in an environment that destabilises and institutionalises. The acquiring of agency that forms positive identity formation and enhancement is the ultimate control and power over one's situation as an incarcerated soul. The ability to think for oneself, select the activities to engage in, form relationships and lead an alternate life that comprises of choice, creative freedom and discovery (learning/acquiring of new knowledge) is an assertion of prison agency in a structurally inhibitive environment. In the absence of loved ones and the removal of the function as a mother, daughter, friend, worker etc., the element of psychological restrictions and the threat to wellbeing is great. Once this has started to erode the individual is at risk of further deterioration, acutely aware of this the women of this study identified a remedy for such in the way of arts engagement and a perceived freedom that this could provide.

Grounded on pilot studies and previous research forming the basis of this project, and even down to the carefully considered choice of participants the overarching theme manifested as the conceived ideal of flow as conceptualised by Csíkszentmihályi (1996). The precursors to flow (the desire to consolidate creative activity for pleasure) and its eventualities in terms of benefits to the individual

(actual engagement in creative activity) provide established links to subsidiary and associated themes around the concept of space and time in the prison environment. Flow as a byproduct of the practice of art is the conduit and the catalyst for the thematic assembling of feelings of positive distraction, critical thinking, absorption of time, thought and energy in a conducive and sensitive manner. Time to work, concentrate solely on one creative aspect of a product, project or individual activity can bring about a sense of self that the individual is comfortable with. Freedom of expression came from the lessening of interference and input of others and encouraged self-sufficiency among the women.

All six women enjoyed the tranquility that could be experienced through the practice of art but the ways in which they have engaged with it in terms of ownership and possessions have varied. In the instance of Bettie and Jacqueline making things for others was more important to them and they had less attachment to physical artefacts than Kay and Susanne did. Both actions are concerned with determining agency that can be established in each conceptual act. Whether making art for pleasure or specific purpose the two are not mutually exclusive in respect of the inner desire for self-gratification that could promote self initiated wellbeing.

The researcher and participant relationship

The relationship between researcher and participant has been crucial to the outcomes and validity of this study. Getting to know the women in this capacity can be likened to the relationships between colleagues or friends to a certain extent, given the intensity of the environment and how quickly relationships are formed.

One will undoubtedly get to know a great deal about another's life, the path they lead and how they may have come to offend. A more in-depth insight into this life is governed when considered in a context of interviewing away from the prison environment. This is especially true when interviewed in a participant's own context, home or neutral environment. The relationships between interviewer and interviewee become less about teacher/prison staff member and learner/prisoner. Similarly, greater insight is provided in terms of the women's internal deliberations, much greater than that divulged as a serving prisoner.

Without the bonds formed whilst engaged in a former relationship of teacher and student-or taking that further as teacher and assistant-the responses and divulgence are particularly interesting in terms of my involvement in many of the experiences shared. Similarly, I was present or facilitating the class where much of the artwork was created. Having been part of this process when considering events and undertakings as the women served their sentences at HMP Sale, the ability to reflect on the participant as they are now presented itself (in the case of five of the six women). This was a significant indicator in determining distance traveled in terms of heightened identity formation. This presented itself as a return to a former or familiar self and the acquisition of new realms of agency brought about by freedom and the aspect of beginning a new life.

Working closely with the sample group in such a capacity (as prisoners), getting to know the individual on a personal level, recognising characteristic traits and patterns of behaviour was limiting somewhat. The experience of working with the women in the teacher role at the time did not extend beyond the art room and therefore through the interview process provided greater understanding of life after

incarceration on a more extensive scale could be achieved. This manifested itself through the discovery of how each woman dealt with their initial days of imprisonment, adjusting to prison life, relationships with others and preparation for release. For those released participants, now removed from the situation and surroundings, each woman was able to consider their experiences as a life event. This was new insight into their prison journey and had not been considered or shared in this way before.

As the researcher is also removed from the restrictive environment the opportunity to reflect on past experiences also presents itself. Again, this shared experience is what makes the outcomes of the interviews and how this informed the data and findings of this research is firmly formed by the unique relationship between researcher and participant. The interview process itself took on that of a conversation reminiscent in context and quality, reflecting on a time of shared memories and shared passions. These captured moments are intimate accounts of a critical time in each woman's life and being part of this scenario as a researcher demanded a great deal of respect and sensitivity when presenting the findings as 'stories' rather than data.

By their own admission, some of the women in the study, Bonnie and Bettie for instance retreated into a fight or flight mode that detracted away from much of the reflexivity that they exercise as a free person. Through their reflexivity and the ability to take a self-critical and analytical viewpoint on a life-altering event such as incarceration, the women articulated the positives taken from it and how this impacted their lives for the better. Through these responses and self-proclamations in the sense that a message of hope with the intention of being transcribed and interpreted by the researcher is presented. Perception was one dimension to each

interview that manifested itself in different forms. There was a perceived need to justify decision making to a certain extent and to prove to oneself and the researcher that they had moved on, made good and so on. Each woman saw their own potential and what they had to offer and wanted to project this in some respect. Susanne wished to dissociate herself with all aspects of prison, firmly making it clear that anonymity along with the researcher participant relationship was most influential in her acceptance to take part in the study. Jacqueline was of a similar mindset in many respects although her anonymity and the risk of exposure to others finding out about her imprisonment did not bother her.

Limitations of the study

This study comprised the narratives of six women affected by the Criminal Justice System, having served time or still serving time at the same UK women's prison. This could be considered to be a relatively small number of participants for a study determining the nature and frequency of desistance over a period of time. In the initial planning stages of the research larger sample groups had been considered and up until the latter stages of the data collection process eight women participants had agreed to take part. With two participants deciding not to take part in the interview process about their prison story the decision was taken not to pursue any further participants in the interests of upholding the personal, humanistic and qualitative approach integral to this research. Since all the women in this study had been considered for their involvement in the arts whilst in prison along with their position and role within the art room there was a very specific selection criteria for those who would be approached. The relationship between participant and researcher was equally as important when selecting the participant group. Although

small in the size the sample group provided a breadth of responses from which to draw parallels and determine predominate themes.

Over the period of 2011-2014 (the period captured by the research) it is estimated that between 250-300 different women attended the art room at HMP Sale on a short or longer-term basis. The vast majority of these women attended as students for days or weeks at a time however the few women involved in this study spent the duration of their sentence working in the room. It is therefore the reasoning and outcomes of such a decision to stay in this location that underpins the explorative nature of this study in terms of identity formation and development of the individual through art. Widening the net to capture the experiences of those who had relatively short stays in the art room would not have successfully leant itself to exploring the longitudinal or retrospective aspect of the study or indeed the conceptual framework.

The women consisted of five released participants (those now living back in the community) and one incarcerated women currently serving a life sentence at HMP Sale . The study may be considered limited in terms of including the prison narrative of just one incarcerated person instead of two or more for purposes of comparison and differentiation. Shaye's contribution to this study has given an alternate perspective to engagement in the arts in prison, considering her involvement in such over a considerable amount of time as well as a projectory account of how the arts may feature in the remainder of her sentence. It had initially been intended for another lifer to be interviewed but this unfortunately did not materialise. Having these comparative stories may have offered greater insight into the continuing prisoner journey as well as differing perspective on experience,

access to the arts, segregation and relationships with the rest of the general prison population (in specific relation to being a 'lifer').

All of the women in this study have been on a transformational journey to some extent. Whether the outcome of such has been significant or transformational to a greater extent demands further study. The data collection period took place between late 2015 and early 2017; owing to this timescale follow up interviews with the participants may have been useful. Five of the women appeared to be on the verge of change, a turning point, working towards an end goal. A follow up study concentrating on the emergence of secondary desistance that could be evidenced via a further shift in personality may be appropriate.

It could be witnessed that the women of this study had experienced some level of secondary desistance whilst others were working towards it through their intentions and future aspirations. Whilst the study captures these aspects there is also scope here for further analytical undertaking when considering identity shifts associated with future milestones in the desisters life course. Such milestones would actively be linked to indicators for and evidence of secondary desistance (the latter stages/stage four of the desistance process).

The timelapse between the now and the conducting of Bonnie's interview dictated that a particular pivotal moment in her desisting activity was not fully captured. The release of her partner and the reuniting of the immediate family unit as it presented prior to imprisonment was integral to her prison and subsequent desisting narrative. Greater exploration of Bonnie's decision making as a result of the previous family fold presenting itself to her again following an overwhelming positive shift in identity

would further support the notion of a transformational shift towards meta-reflexivity and higher order thinking. Similarly Bettie's ongoing pursuit of building a successful arts and crafts business would undoubtedly create further opportunity for reflexivity as she moved towards greater self and financial independence which was her intended goal.

Visiting Shaye a year on from her first interview would have been beneficial as at the time of interviewing she was in a very dark place and her experiences had not been positive in the sense that she had limited access to the arts. Through assessing this access a year on, the situation may have changed. As someone who presented as having a fractured identity as a result of her incarceration and management as a restricted status and life serving prisoner a longitudinal study is required. This would establish if further shifts towards positive identity formation could be observed. This study would largely involve the consideration of interventions with Shaye and her continuing attempts at retaining and asserting a certain amount of agency.

The timescales for collecting data, imagery and access to HMP Sale for the purposes of collating Shaye's case study differed dramatically than that of women interviewed in the community. Unlike the other five women obtaining images of Shaye's work or viewing any original artwork was difficult to locate and the obtaining any such material was reliant on the communication and efficiency from designated staff at the prison. The visual arts and crafts outcomes produced by the women is integral to this research and compliments fully the personal nature and scope of this study as a collection of personal narratives. In the absence of a substantial body of artwork produced by Shaye for review and inclusion in this research a dimension of the data is somewhat lacking when considered alongside the extension work

generated and shared by the other five women. On the other hand this absence of Shaye's visual contribution alongside her narrative account further articulates the fractured nature of her circumstance and state of mind from a perspective of structurally imposed situation and mindset.

Conclusion

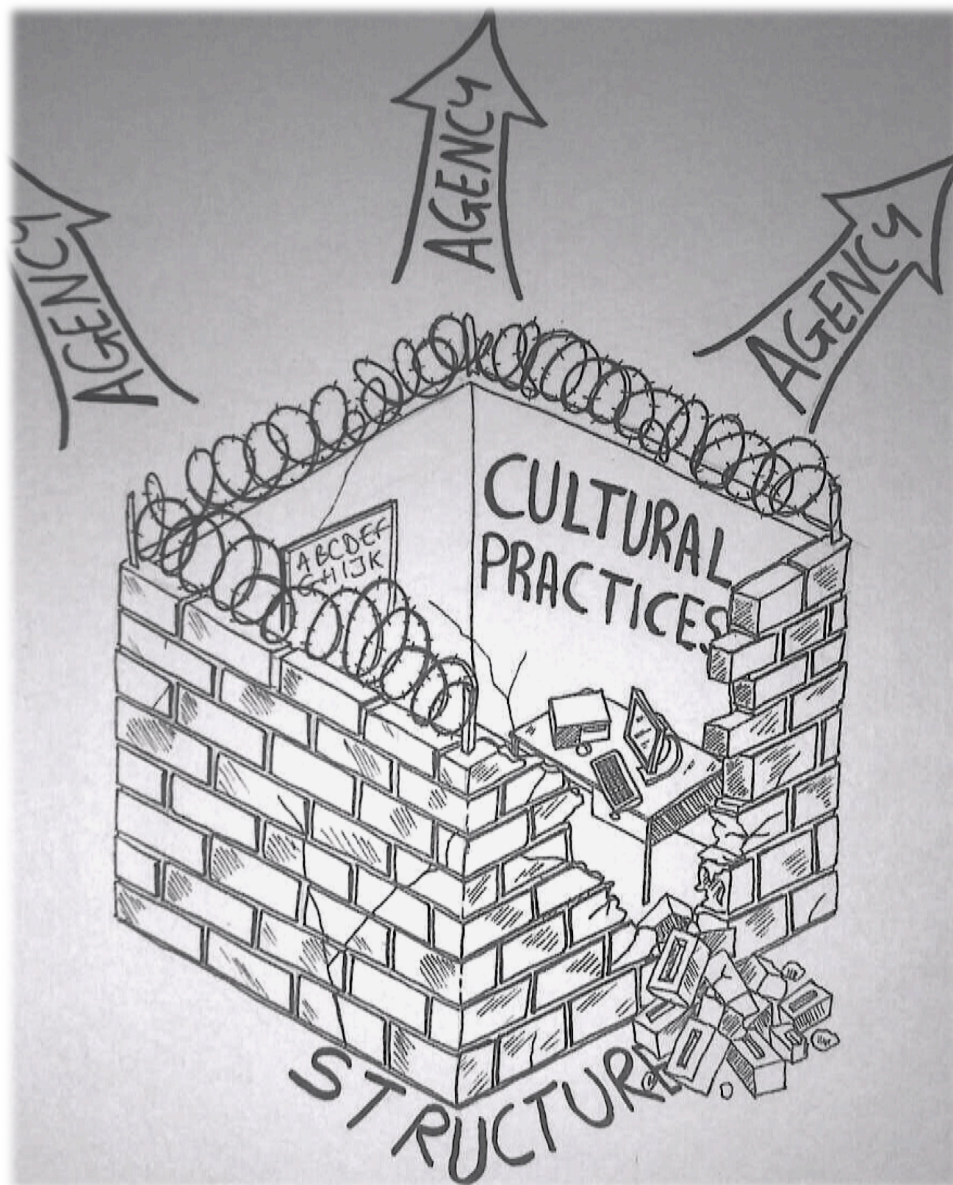


Figure 46: Agency assertion, illustration courtesy of Glynn McCarthy (see appendix 7).

Archer (2003) associates a move to a greater sense of critical forming self in terms of reflexivity to age and maturity. The outcomes of this study have suggested that age is subsidiary to significant intervention and placement in abstractivity, namely prison and the implications of such on the individual that can be witnessed with immediate effect. This notion indicates that radical intervention as such has the potential to propel the process (shifts in reflexive identity) as a result of the incarcerated person's desire to 'make good' and change the status quo in a relatively short space of time.

All of the six women wanted to fill a void that had been brought through imprisonment and the restriction of recreational activity which they had unlimited access to as a free person. All of them gravitated towards arts practice, ranking it high on their list of desired activity/work areas at induction upon their arrival to HMP Sale. When the women were allocated to attend the art room they have each commented on the physical space, the atmosphere and the immediate recognition that they wanted to remain in this space for the remainder of their sentences. Opportunity presented itself individually to each in the form of access to materials, creative response and feedback and interaction with art tutors as well as relationships with other women. Links to the outside world and in a broader vocational sense presented themselves in relation to competition, exhibition, contacts with external agencies and charities and potential sources of income.

This is most prominent for Bettie who was heavily involved in submitting artwork to the Koestler Trust Awards and remained an active entrant to the annual awards during her time spent in the community on probation following her release. Her continued engagement with the charity as part as their mentorship scheme (although not without its disadvantages as outlined in chapter four) acted as conduit

between positive prison arts experience, the Criminal Justice System and her ongoing rehabilitation.

As workers and assistants the women thrived in the art room. They engaged with other women that they would not routinely come into contact with, women from different backgrounds, those they may have previously judged or passed by on the street without thought. In the art room they had to work together, working with women that were coming off drugs, victims of abuse and prolific offenders and so on. The prison population of HMP Sale is vastly diverse, comprising women from all different walks of life placed together through abstractivity. With the exception of Shaye (predominantly housed in segregation for her sentence) all of the women were housed on units for enhanced prisoners (those displaying a greater sense of and in the case of Bonnie on the mother and baby unit her interaction with the general prison population extended to the art room). When in the room the sample group were supportive of young mums, those less fortunate, those without visitation and those who had lost custody of children. The relationships formed by the women were an integral and informative part of the interview process, in particular the motherly roles that prevailed.

There was emotional attachment to other women, Bonnie, Jacqueline, Susanne and Bettie all expressing a great sadness for the plight of others. Assuming a role that would allow an extension of a former self, the environment of the art room allowing them to fulfill this role. The need and demand from others to act as a motherly figure or a guiding mentor was beneficial to all and heavily documented in the responses from each of the six women. Even Shaye enjoyed the role of assisting

others and being part of a team that benefitted the wider needs of the prison population in terms of arts and crafts work.

Caulfield (2015) noted this notion of tolerance and empathy when considering collaborative creative activity among incarcerated women. The social skills developed through the arts project are particularly significant for women who have histories of poor relationships, aggression, and problematic interpersonal skills. The findings support previous research, but what the research sought to explore was whether these findings were sustained three months after the project. Almost half the women said they had either made new friendships, continued to speak to others they met during the project, and/or become more open to 'different types' of people (Caulfield 2016:6):

'I realised that if I actually speak to these girls, one-on-one, they're ok.'

(Female arts participant in Caulfield 2015:6)

There is powerfulness here regarding the importance and emphasis placed upon the physical space itself of the art room and how this brought about creativity, freedom of expression, accessibility and facilitation of relationships bonds. Acting as a subliminal conduit between the outside world and a new alternate reality as a serving prisoner the art room was a way for many of its patrons to retain a certain level of autonomous internal deliberation. This often prompted a response of acknowledgement of a former self. These autonomous powers as articulated and alluded to through the interviewing process and upon review of the artwork provide a glimpse into the reflexive ability of the individual. We cannot only ascertain the extent of such critical thinking as former beings prior to incarceration but also as agents working in the art room.

All six women spoke so passionately about the camaraderie and friendships within the art room as a result had encouraged them to consider their own lives. This was a constant and consistent theme that is central and most integral to enhanced reflexivity and more meaningful internal dialogue leading to positive action. The practice of art and those able to facilitate the process (i.e. prison staff, teachers) acts as a conduit between the individual acquiring of agency and the structural environment that inadvertently enables this to happen, albeit as an abstract conception.

The structural elements allow for an assertion and retention of agency borne from a desire and ability to create artwork and the practice of creativity itself. These elements consisted of the art room, without windows or means of escape, an enclosed space closely guarded by those with keys. The scenario is structured in implied regulation, in other words the women were unable to come and go as they pleased, as with every other area within HMP Sale movement was questioned and monitored. However, the art room had the capacity and ability for the women to excel in terms of freedom of expression and creating alternate dimensions lived out through the artwork they created, of which they had full autonomy over. This acquisition of agency was supported by the teaching staff not only role as educators but in part as structural beings for the purposes of security and detention. An eventuality of such has resulted in facets of the cultural prison structure influencing and facilitating the culmination of agency more commonly associated with the free willed.

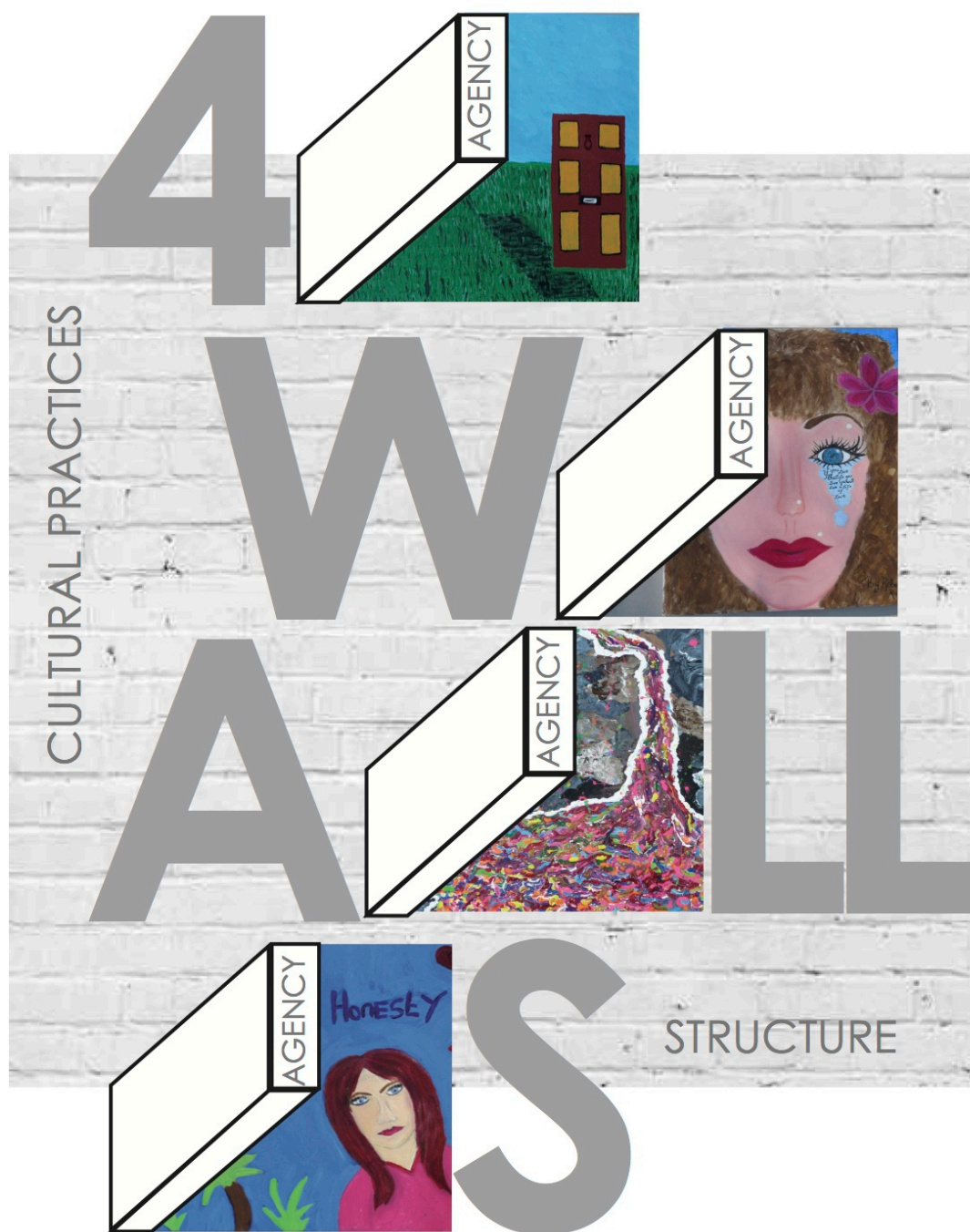


Figure 47: Four walls: agency VS structure, illustration courtesy of Peter Blake (see appendix 7).

This notion is captured in figures 46 and 47 where the cultural practices of the prison, 'the structural compound' facilitate the acquisition of agency. Cultural practices influence the agential outcomes for individuals resulting in what is illustrated here as a breakthrough of structural boundaries synonymous with incarceration. The images dramatise the effect of educational intervention of HMP

Sale and how this acts as a driver for self-sufficiency leading to agency that is able to offer freedom under confinement. The notion of the 'wall' denotes the struggle between structure and agency with the two notions-the detainer and the detained-being diametrically opposed.

Original contribution to knowledge

The data generated comes from a place of trust and privilege from a researcher's perspective, considering the element of practitioner research coupled with the poignancy of the close relationship between participant and researcher. As a result this thesis has demonstrated that the practice of arts in prison for women participants can be prolific in its ability to aid rehabilitation and support the desistance process in relation to building confidence and the associated assertion of agency and autonomy. This has been largely achieved and evidenced through the consideration and personal narrative of artworks and artefacts of great importance and sentiment to the women in this study, also demonstrating the element of distance travelled or progress made, vital to any rehabilitative process.

The findings have also shown that progressive identities are apparent by the conduit of the explanation of artefacts and personal growth indicative of the desistance process. This has subsequently resulted in self-discovery and personal narrative, documenting time, existence, notable change and shifts in identity of a positive nature. This research also sought to decipher personal experiences, identity and reflexive ability prior to imprisonment, whereby previous self-identity and one's placing in society have been determined for some participants. In doing

so, the true extent of shifts in identity and powers of reflexivity have truly come into fruition in terms of the revelation of a new reformed self. This is true in the case of participant Bonnie, for whom displaying and practising meta-reflexivity has strongly suggested an indication of tertiary desistance, the creation of a replacement self, and evidence of rehabilitation having taken place.

The use of artefacts as data collection offers great insight into personal journey and space in terms of psychological and reflexive activity of the participants. The pieces of artwork act as markers in time for change and significant life events, enabling sub-conscious articulation of desistance. The images, paintings and craft items contributed by the women are memories of specific points in time and support personal dialogue and story telling. These artefacts themselves have provided new phenomena in thinking around critical discourses in prison arts and how they relate to desistance theory. In particular, the emphasis of identity formation and how the physical piece of artwork can portray this process.

Reccomendations

Given the element and notion of practitioner research in respect of prison employees and educational professionals in the context of this research, more studies should be championed to involve such parties. Ownership of projects concerning the outcome of interventions, arts based or otherwise are more akin to those that work closely with offenders and desisting individuals in the community. Giving these individuals a voice and active positioning in the research process will give greater insight and innovation into the transformational and rehabilitative nature of arts practice.

This study clearly demonstrates that arts participation goes a long way in supporting rehabilitation and desistance, supporting women personally in promoting better mental health and wellbeing through a sense of purpose being sought and largely achieved through arts practice. Education providers and those working with offenders in a training and/or self-development capacity need to consider using arts interventions and the promotion of arts practice to greater effect, especially where re-entry to work and/or society is concerned. Greater access to arts materials, mediums for exploration and self-discovery through practice needs to routinely engage individuals wishing to pursue solitary activities in their cells or as part of a wider sentence plan or even a vocational aim.

Arts practice for incarcerated individuals should be commonplace in prisons and other secure settings and easily accessible to participants. Sentence planning and offender management of the individual should focus more holistically on the personal, social and behavioural development of arts practice. Arts based programmes are a vital component to the desistance process and established indicators for secondary and tertiary desistance (as evidenced through this research). As a result, there is scope and rationale for further criminological research in terms of longitudinal study with desisting women several years after release from prison. Such investigation would provide great insight into the long-term effects and longevity of arts interventions associated with rehabilitation and support the ongoing argument for greater access to the arts in prison.

The concentration of research into the evaluation of prison arts interventions several years after release has scarcely been undertaken by researchers. Subsequently, research outcomes have resulted in the suggestion and indication that tertiary

desistance may take place in the future, however cannot ultimately be determined. This research has clearly identified that such study is pertinent in establishing a better understanding of desistance and can have great relevance to the rehabilitative agenda of the arts and the importance and prominence of such to the process.

A final thought

This research has been successful in reporting successful desistance stories with tangible links to arts practice both inside and outside of prison. There are some significant indicators of change and progression consistent with the secondary stages of desistance, trackable at stages three and four when considering transformational reformation. This is not to suggest that all six women have reached such a self-affirming conclusion, however the extent of which each has achieved a sense of self, self worth and independence in whatever guise is varying but undeniable. Strides towards an alternate experience of prison reminiscent of creating a replacement self were made through the direct engagement in a number of creative practices.

If only momentarily, each woman experienced a degree of accelerated independence brought about by escapism, determined as flow. A complete immersion in a creative act thus creating an untouchable self of sense and psychological wellbeing that the structural confines of prison could not deter. The continuity surrounding the legitimacy of evaluating prison arts interventions after release is a contentious affair. However, this study leads to positive conclusion rather than speculation that the transformational power of the arts as a method for

achieving a heightened sense of self, conducive with a positive identity can truly come into fruition.

It is still unclear as to whether desistance can ever truly be discovered and documented by the researcher or indeed definitively alluded to by the desister. In terms of identifying and evidencing such an occurrence is dependent on trust, truth and accuracy from the desisting individual and the confidence installed in the researcher. The reliance put upon the individual to describe a true representation and response to their ceasing of offending, communicated by the divulging of their inner dialogue is unsubstantiated. Through consideration of specific points in time the researcher must therefore establish distance travelled as significant and critical incidents occur in the life of the desister.

The abstinence of crime witnessed in all five released participants is consistent with substantial and unequivocal shifts towards creating a replacement self that may otherwise not have manifested. This is especially where life choices and criminality is still in a feature of each woman's life. However, the consideration for desistance and what this means for the individual has been referred to within this thesis as a means of encapsulating a willingness within the individual to accept one's own circumstance, past and power afforded in order to bypass a less conducive life. In this sense desistance theory has been considered less as trajectory for moving away from crime but as an indicator of self-transformation and renewal associated with the realms of desistance and what this entails in a broader sense. Ultimately it is the study of the undertaking of self-discovery by reflexivity through creativity resulting in the apparatus to lead a more meaningful life as a 'free' soul.

The intervention of art may not be the prolific evidenced based component to the desistance process that is often required to support own initiative for rehabilitation. It is however the powerful indicator and accelerator for change and opening up of the mind to new ways of working, communicating with others and responding to certain situations and eventualities. This is clearly evidenced throughout the themes chapter, collating a number of personal and social development skills among the women that have enabled positive action in the form of heightened reflexivity consistent with meta-reflexivity. Where these instances have been significant in mode and frequency change has been present within individual's character, prompting a differing response to how they deal with the complexity of situations around them. Arguably, the presence of Giordano et al's (2002) hooks for change, comprising of the third stage of desistance theory is the most crucial stage in the process. The hooks however must manifest and be substantial, credible and powerful in the ability to accelerate the change process in the desisting individual. The scope and opportunity for arts practice to act as an overarching hook encompasses the powerful nature of its existence and how it can transform a person's life. With this in mind, I will therefore finish on this note:

'Although the potential benefits of such [arts] interventions are becoming increasingly recognised there is no policy in place to make such interventions mandatory in prisons'.

(Kinsella & Woodall 2016:16)

Appendix One: Interview Questions

Set A (for participants released from prison)

1. Tell me about your experience of prison generally.i.e. what were your first thoughts and emotions when you arrived? Were you: scared, angry, anxious etc?
2. How much control or influence did you have over the activities or work that you took up when you were first incarcerated?
3. What prompted you to apply for an art course at the prison?
4. What was your experience of art/making art before you arrived at prison?
 - How would you describe your artistic abilities before you arrived into prison?
 - In what ways (if all) did your artistic skills improve whilst in prison?
5. How much creative freedom were you given within the prison art room?
 - Did you work independently when creating pieces of artwork?
 - Did you work as part of a group to produce artwork?
 - Were you able to access the materials, resources and equipment you needed in order to complete projects?
6. Did you enter pieces of artwork into any competitions, exhibitions or projects either within or beyond your control? I.e. work that was not returned or made for use within or outside of the prison.
 - Were you informed of and encouraged to enter competitions or exhibitions by tutors or other prison staff or did you seek out opportunities yourself?
7. When creating artwork did you consult or seek the opinion/appreciation/approval from others whilst in prison?
 - What level of supervision or guidance did you require/receive from the tutors when creating artwork?
 - What was the impact of any artistic guidance upon your artwork?

8. Can you tell me about any responses that you have had from friends or family regarding the artwork that you produced whilst in prison?

-In what context were they able to view your artwork?

9. How did you feel when you were creating work in the art room?

10. Thinking back to your time in prison, what would you say were your drivers, influences or inspirations for creating artworks?

-How readily available were sources of research and materials to support your work? I.e. obtaining resources, tools and equipment etc.

11. How much ownership did you have over artworks completed in prison?

-Were you able to keep pieces that you produced? If so, what did you do with them?

12. Can you tell me about any artworks that you have produced or creative practices you have continued with/taken up since leaving prison?

-How does making artwork now compare to when you are creating it in prison?

-If you haven't engaged in any creative activities, are there reasons for this?

Set B (for incarcerated participants)

1. Tell me about your experience of prison generally..i.e. what were your first thoughts and emotions when you arrived? Were you: scared, angry, anxious etc?

2. How much control or influence did you have over the activities or work that you took up when you were first incarcerated?

3. What prompted you to choose an arts based activity whilst in prison?

-Can you tell me about where you produce artwork? i.e. in your cell, the art room etc.

4. What was your experience of art/making art before you arrived at prison?

-How would you describe your artistic abilities before?

-In what ways (if all) have your artistic skills improved?

5. How does the making of art and/or attending the art room feature in your day-to-day life in prison?

-How important to you is participation in the arts whilst in prison?

-What other activities/work do you partake in?

6. When creating artwork do you consult or seek the opinion/appreciation/approval from others whilst in prison?

-How much supervision or guidance have you required/received from the tutors when creating artwork?

-What (if at all) impact has artistic guidance had upon your artwork?

7. Can you tell me about any responses that you have had from friends or family regarding the artwork that you produced whilst in prison?

-In what context were they able to view your artwork?

-If you have not been able/not wanted to share your work with loved ones, what are the reasons for this?

8. What would you say were your drivers, influences or inspirations for creating artworks?

-How readily available are sources of research and materials to support your work? I.e. obtaining resources, tools and equipment etc.

9. How much ownership do you have over the artwork that you produce in terms of themes, use of materials and equipment and where the work ends up etc?

-Have you been able to keep any of the artwork you've produced whilst in prison?

-What have you done with it/what would you like to do with it?

10. How do you feel when you are creating work in the art room or anywhere else within the prison?

11. Can you tell me about any artworks you have submitted to competitions, exhibitions or produced as part of an external project, i.e. working with galleries, artists and charities on an individual or group project.

-How important is your involvement in such activities? What are the benefits to you?

-If you haven't been involved in anything of this nature, are there reasons for this?

12. Can you tell me about any plans you may have for the development of artistic skills and production of future artworks? I.e. learning a new craft, entering a competition, working to a commission etc.

Questions about the artwork

1. What is the title of this piece and where and when did you make it?

2. Why have you chosen to show this particular piece as opposed to others you have created?

3. Looking at the piece now, can you remember what you were thinking and feeling at the time of making it?

4. What response did you receive from others (if any) whilst making it?

5. Who has seen this piece? I.e. was it exhibited/entered into a competition/shown to loved ones etc. (if the answer is nobody go straight to question 9)

6. What response did you get from them (if any)?

7. If this piece was exhibited somewhere what feedback (if any) did you get from the gallery/organisers/judges/public etc.?

8. What did it mean for to you that your work was shown to others in this way?

9. What emotions does this piece conger up for you as you look at it today?

10. Did you want to convey any particular message or emotion to viewers when you made the piece? Do you feel you achieved this? If yes, wh

Appendix Two: Consent Form



CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Art Interventions and the Desistance Process: Agency through Art Among Female Offenders During Incarceration and Upon Release

Name of Lead Investigator: Sophie Nickeas

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated

☐

(version 3) for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my response may be recorded.

☐

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, even where the research has been completed and submitted.

☐

4. I understand that by disclosing information regarding illegal acts (previous and planned) and/or behaviour which is harmful to myself or others (e.g. intention to self-harm or commit suicide) will result in the researcher reporting it to the appropriate authorities.

☐

5. I agree to take part in the above study.

☐

Name of Participant
Signature

Date

Researcher
Signature

Date



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Project: Art Interventions and the Desistance Process: Agency through Art Among Female Offenders During Incarceration and Upon Release

Name of Lead Investigator: Sophie Nickeas

Nature of project and your involvement: this study looks at the ways in which the arts in prison may potentially help someone. Your involvement with arts during time spent in prison and any involvement upon your immediate release and the subsequent months/years since will be the theme of all interviews conducted. The project is intended to give an insight into how art in prison might help a person during their imprisonment and potentially upon their release. Prior to your interview you will have the opportunity to view the questions and give thought to your answers, you will also be able to ask any questions or make suggestions prior to the interview. The study is completely anonymous, your name, name and location of the prison will not be mentioned or identified anywhere within the text and you can choose a pseudonym for your involvement. You will be able to ask questions, enquire about the project's progress and outcomes at any time. You also have the right to withdraw your contribution at any point by. Upon completion you will receive a copy of the research.

Thank you for being an integral part of this research and contributing to a study that aims to support other women in the future through gaining a better understanding of their rehabilitative and educational needs.



Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher
Signature

Date

Appendix Three: Letter to Shaye 1



October 2015

Dear Shaye,

I am writing to you in anticipation to enquire as to whether you would be willing to take part in a study that I am currently conducting as part of my research degree. I hope that you will remember that some time ago whilst I was still employed at HMP----- I discussed with you my research project. I am looking to interview women who have engaged with the arts whilst in prison to discuss their experiences in a bid to understand how the arts support women whilst in prison. I have spent the past two years at University researching, writing and speaking at conferences on the topic on the arts and female prisoners.

I would be immensely grateful if you would allow for me to interview you about your experiences of art in prison as someone who actively engages in creative activity. I have enclosed a consent form with a set of questions that I wish to ask of you about your experiences, I would also like to discuss a piece of artwork of your choice that you have made. I will scribe your responses and you can use the pseudonym of your choice, your name or the name of the prison will not be featured in any writing, this is a totally anonymous study. This research is solely centred on women's stories and experiences of art in prison, I will not be asking any intrusive questions at any time.

If you agree, I would like to come and visit you at some point in November, giving you a chance to consider the questions that I want to ask beforehand and select an artwork to discuss.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts and I hope to work with you in the near future.

Kind regards

Sophie Nickeas

Appendix Four: Email to The Koestler Trust

From: Nickeas, Sophie [HMPS] [<mailto:Sophie.Nickeas@hmps.gsi.gov.uk>]
Sent: 03 October 2016 11:33
To: The Koestler Trust <info@koestlertrust.org.uk>
Subject: FW: FAO Arts team

Hi there,

I am currently completing a doctorate in education concerning arts engagement with groups of female offenders and ex-offenders. Between 2011-2014 I was employed as an art teacher at HMYOI [redacted] and worked extensively with present inmate [redacted].

Earlier on in the year I interviewed [redacted] at [redacted] as part of my research, during the interview she spoke about a piece of work that she entered into the 2015 awards, a large sculpture resembling a mountain/volcano simulating a board game, she thinks she named it 'Blood Mountain' but wasn't entirely sure. There don't appear to be any photos of the piece taken whilst it was being made/still at [redacted] and having spoken to the current art teacher there at the seminar at the South Bank recently the piece hasn't been returned to the prison ([redacted] is a lifer and the piece would not have been sent to a relative).

Are you able to tell me whether the piece has been returned to the prison, are there any photos? I have a consent form signed by [redacted] to use her work in my research and be interviewed, I also have consent from prison to conduct research there, I would very much like to include visual imagery of [redacted] piece that she has discussed with me. Any help is greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance
Sophie

Sophie Nickeas

Deputy Head of Education

NOVUS Foundations For Change

Justice Sector | HMYOI Cookham Wood, Rochester, Kent, ME1 3LU

☎: 01634 202600 ✉: sophie.nickeas@hmps.gsi.gov.uk

UNCLASSIFIED PROTECT RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL

From: [redacted]
Sent: 04 October 2016 10:29
To: 'Nickeas, Sophie [HMPS]' <Sophie.Nickeas@hmps.gsi.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: FAO Arts team

Hello Sophie,

We do not have any images of this piece I am afraid. Let me look into last year's returns records and I'll get back to you on this as soon as possible.

All the best,

[redacted]

[redacted]
Arts Administrator

The Koestler Trust
168a Du Cane Road
London, W12 0TX
Tel: 020 8740 0333
Email: lpattison@koestlertrust.org.uk
Web: www.koestlertrust.org.uk

Koestler Trust
arts by offenders ■ ■ ■

Registered Charity No.1105759, Company Limited by Guarantee, Registered in England No. 04961363
Registered Office: 168a Du Cane Road, London, W12 0TX

WE ARE ALL HUMAN

Art by Offenders, Secure Patients and Detainees from the 2016 Koestler Awards

From: [redacted] [mailto:L[redacted]@koestlertrust.org.uk]
Sent: 05 October 2016 17:05
To: Nickeas, Sophie [HMPS] <Sophie.Nickeas@hmps.gsi.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: FAO Arts team

Dear Sophie,

I have looked into this further and I can see that the entrant kindly donated her artwork to the Koestler Trust last year, therefore it was not returned to the prison.

Unfortunately after some time we were unable to sell the artwork, and as you may know we work in very small building with very limited storage space; therefore I am very sorry to say that this particular artwork has been deaccessioned and disposed of. I am very sorry for any inconvenience and disappointment caused.

If I can assist you further in any way please let me know. Again please accept my sincere apologies.

All the best,

[redacted]

Arts Administrator

The Koestler Trust
168a Du Cane Road
London, W12 0TX
Tel: 020 8740 0333
Email: lpattison@koestlertrust.org.uk
Web: www.koestlertrust.org.uk

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WE ARE ALL HUMAN

Art by Offenders, Secure Patients and Detainees from the 2016 Koestler Awards

Appendix Five: Letter to Shaye 2



March 2017

Dear Shaye,

I am writing to you in response to our meeting last year. You previously agreed to take part in my study of the arts in prison with female offenders and ex-offenders. As you will remember I visited you at HMP----- in early 2016 and conducted an interview relating to your experiences of art whilst being in prison. You spoke extensively about a piece that you created for Koestler in 2014 or 2015; a sculpture entitled 'Blood Mountain'. I enquired about this piece's whereabouts with the Koestler Trust and they sent me the following response by email:

Dear Sophie,

I have looked into this further and I can see that the entrant kindly donated her artwork to the Koestler Trust last year, therefore it was not returned to the prison.

Unfortunately after some time we were unable to sell the artwork, and as you may know we work in very small building with very limited storage space; therefore I am very sorry to say that this particular artwork has been deaccessioned and disposed of. I am very sorry for any inconvenience and disappointment caused.

If I can assist you further in any way please let me know. Again please accept my sincere apologies.

All the best,

*Arts Administrator
The Koestler Trust*

In light of this I have been unable to include any images of any of your artwork in my research as planned. Could I please ask for a response from you regarding this piece of work not being returned to you and being disposed of, you may already be aware of this so please forgive me. Upon reading this news can you tell me how you feel about losing your work in this way? A written statement passed onto ----- or addressed to the

Governor would be much appreciated. I require this information back towards the end of March as I am due to submit my completed research paper by mid April.

During our interview you also mentioned making a number of paper crafted items from scrap paper and the pages of old books, a hedgehog and so on. If any of the items are still in your possession I would very much like a photograph of one or more if possible. I will liaise directly with staff to see if this can be facilitated.

I look forward to your response,

Kind regards

Sophie Nickeas

Appendix Six: Email to HMP Sale

To: -----

5 March 2017 21:56

From: sophiedenis@hotmail.co.uk

Fw: Request to visit to conduct research/complete doctoral research STRICTLY
CONFIDENTIAL

Dear both,

It is unfortunate and somewhat disappointing that I never heard back regarding a final visit to ----- in support of my ongoing research, however I realise how busy everyone is. In light of me submitting my completed thesis in April a visit at this late stage is probably not advisable however I do have a request in relation to ----- who I interviewed last year.

----- discussed a piece of work that she wanted to include in my research but unfortunately I wasn't able to get a photo of it as it was disposed of by the Koestler Trust. I would like to include ----- response to this and I have attached a letter for her.

With your agreement I would like her to write a response that she could pass onto you, if it is also possible to also obtain photos of some of the paper craft items she has made in her cell. The actual work created by the participants is integral to my research project and I would be immensely grateful if this could be arranged. Perhaps this is something that tutor ----- could possibly arrange?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks

Sophie

To: sophiedenis@hotmail.co.uk

12 April 2017 22:17

From: -----

RE: Request to visit to conduct research/complete doctoral research STRICTLY
CONFIDENTIAL

Hello Sophie

Please find attached a letter from -----

There is no work remaining – the letter will explain why.

I hope this is what you require, if not please let me know.

Thanks,

Appendix Seven: Letter from Shaye via Head of Learning, Skills & Employment, HMP Sale

H.M.P.

Dear Sophie,

Thankyou for getting in touch with me about my artwork, my piece for the Koestler Awards called 'Blood Mountain' came as a great shock to me that it had been destroyed. It took me at least 4 months to do this piece as it was all made out of paper-mache + on quite a large scale as I intended it as a game.

When I completed the form for it to go to Koestler I did highlight the fact that if it did not sell to return it. I am really upset and angry that a piece of work that took so long has been destroyed.

I did do another piece for a competition and the Theme was 'Heroes and Villains' again I did this in paper-mache and did an Ice-age Scene with 2 14inch Sculptures of 1 female Hero and 1 female Villain.

Once completed it was placed on the side in Arts + Crafts to be taken to this competition, but I was horrified to find that [] had just thrown it under the side with boxes and paper thrown on top of it.

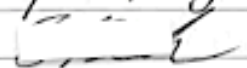
[] destroyed all my artwork which is unforgivable so unfortunately I have nothing for you to photograph. The 2 pieces I did in paper-mache would have been ideal but unfortunately to my dismay they've been destroyed.



I do however have one piece of work

which is in my Bulk property which I did for Koestler, this piece I did on a large board, I painted this and it was the Anniversary of World War II So my Theme for this piece was to paint a Silhouette of a lone Soldier at the Side of his daughters grave, a Sunset in the background and I wrote a poem and ghosted this over the picture.

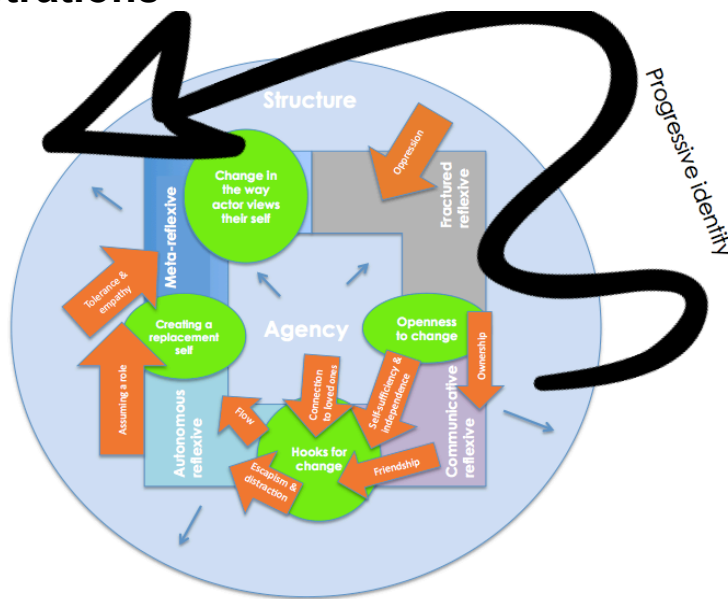
This would make a good photograph for you, when I sent this piece to Koestler I stated not for sale and that I wanted it returned.

So this is the only piece I have left but like I said it would make a beautiful photograph.

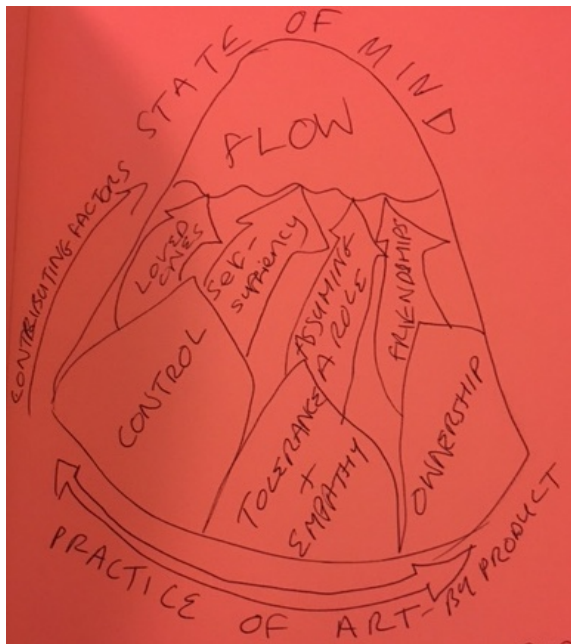
Yours faithfully


Appendix 7: Original images/ideas used to formulate illustrations

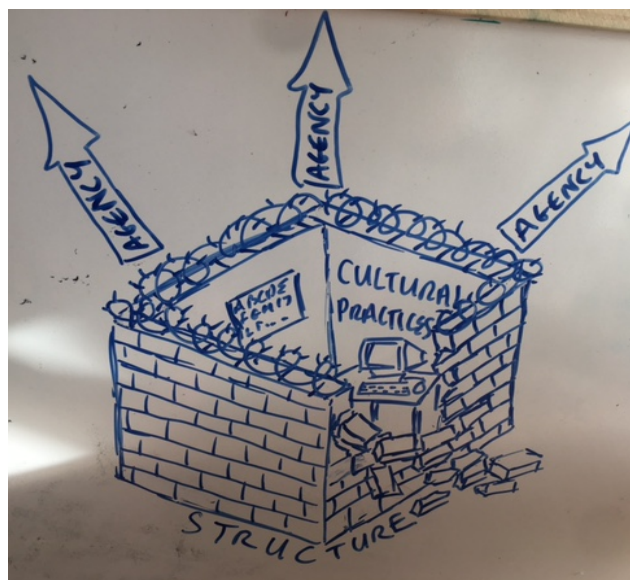


Left: Model of Reflexivity/Desistance Theory in Action (figure 45 in the main text) shows the original diagram plan that graphic designer Peter Blake worked from.



Left: The Hierarchy of Flow original sketch (figure 43 in the main text) shows the original image that graphic designer Peter Blake worked from and used original images of women prisoners' artwork from HMP Sale in the final edition. Peter had access to the images as he also taught art at HMP Sale.

Below: Agency Assertion/4 Walls sketch (figures 46 & 47 in the main text) shows the original image that graphic designer Peter Blake and illustrator Glynn McCarthy worked from.



Appendix 8: Bettie's interview transcript

Bettie (B) interviewee
Sophie (S) interviewer
10/07/16

S: So without being too intrusive, like I said last night I don't want it to be about why you were there [prison] or anything like that it's just like the first couple of questions about when you first came in [to prison] and understanding sort of where people's minds are at and then you go into the art room. So when you first you first went into prison, what were sort of your initial, what were your initial thoughts and feelings, can you remember? Sort of..

B: yeah.

S: day one? Week one?

B: I was in complete shock. All I could think about was the kids obviously, not but completely a fish out of water. I never expected to be where I was. Yeah, my whole world had gone. Yeah just found it very scary.

S: so when you were..how quickly when you came in did you go to the inductions, like the first couple of days or the first few days?

B: yeah, yeah. Again I didn't really, like I didn't even realize that the women that were telling us all this stuff [induction staff] were prisoners. Um, and I obviously saw that there was an art department and education things you could do I think I ticked everything on the art box [laughs]. And cause I just had to fill in a few things...

S: I think it was like ten. You use to have to choose ten things yeah.

B: I think I put English and Maths as well. Yeah but everything was just whatever art based thing I could see. Tick, tick, tick, [laughs] cause I knew it was something that I could do and could give me a focus to keep my mind on something, off everything you know? And I know that within the first week I just started drawing in my cell when I wasn't out at work or anything. I'd just sit there and draw little pictures that I'd got out of books and stuff. Just drew pictures constantly cause it kept my mind focused on something. Stop me from panicking [laughs], yeah.

S: so..my next question's about what your experience of art was before prison and I, I know a bit about that obviously and I know you'd done your A Level and your work before but how much, how much were you doing before, as in..

B: so I did my A Level decades ago. And after that I didn't really do an awful lot, I had a place at art college but I turned it down cause I wanted to work with animals and I became a zoo keeper and I did do a bit of art whilst I was at the zoo. Then stuff happened and I met [says husband's name] and then I got back to...and I always drew you know with the kids, they've got their creativity. And then I worked as a teaching assistant and I got given the role of like in charge of all the art

displays, the big display boards, taking stock of all the art equipment, you got..sort of like an art co-coordinator and I ran an art club after school for the kids. So yeah that's when I got, sort of started using art again. And then the bomb went off [laughs].

S: [laughs] yeah.

S: so how much, when you were in social enterprise [prison art room] and you did the course and then became a worker.. you were a worker first and then an assistant?

B: yeah.

S: yeah. Cause I remember Peter [art tutor] saying there's a really, there's a, there's a new woman that's really good and we used to get people in and sort of latch onto it because you know what it was like in there people really used to like that room and there was also a lot of apathy in there as well. So when we got somebody like that, we'd want...they use to make a great assistant. But how much creative freedom do you think you had in the room?

B: lots really, I mean in the creative constraints of the room, there were materials you can't use, cause I remember being there and thinking oh god I hate paper mache, god I can't do charcoal drawing, I can't do 3D things and actually I could I just hadn't had, had, really tried. Um, so I think actually, even though you've got probably less, even less materials than you would normally have access to it makes you think more about what you're making and makes you more creative in what you are making. So actually in the end I ended preferring it, liking it more because it challenged you a bit more. Makes you think outside the box that you wouldn't have normally considered normally. You know to see what some women could make out of paper mache, yeah.

S: or jay cloths.

B: yes or a bar of soap carved.

S: yeah.

B: which is just amazing, I used to be amazed at what people could do, especially some that you would think didn't want to do it or anything at all.

S: do you think that's a connotation with the type [where you are], because you're not gonna sit at home and make a sculpture out of soap are you?

B: no.

S: but people do in prisons, it where some of the most prolific work has come out of prisons. Especially if you go to the Koestler and you see these just amazing...

B: yeah.

S: ...a man had obviously got about fifty bars of soap or more and put it all together and make a big a big blob and carved a dragon into it and it was amazing. Incredible, did he sit before he was in prison and do stuff like that?

B: probably never done a thing like that.

S: no.

B: I think because you're time is completely focused.

S: yeah, like, and everything's slowed down. So like you worked on a lot of things independently, so what about the support that you got..i don't want to lead you, I want you to..to find out..did you use the teachers?

B: yeah, I found everyone pretty much [helpful] in the art department, I got on with all of you [teachers] straightaway. I know there were people that always gave X such a hard time but, and I know, but I never saw it. And I know he could be a little bit tetchy at times..

S: yeah..

B: ..but hey you know they're not easy people to work with and you don't know what's going on in people's personal lives either so I never had a problem with Peter, I always got on really well with him. I always found you extremely helpful and..

S: X?

B: I never really had much to do with X, she was on maternity leave.

S: oh yeah, she came back in, end of 2013.

B: yeah.

B: I found that you were all encouraged, me to try new things.

S: yeah, I think we relied on you quite a lot.

B: it was good because it was probably something I would have probably never done and I kept me, it gave me, pushed me out of my comfort zone. Obviously I know I'd been a teaching assistant but it was with young children and helping out with, just a different thing.

S: but I truly believe that you you had somebody decent [classroom assistants], a couple of them as they do, they were kind of the backbone of the room and you were really relied on. We had so many women in there and sort of, you know, as much as we could, that was your job..

B: I felt, I felt like part of the team and I didn't feel like just another inmate. And definitely felt like I was doing something that was benefitting myself and definitely benefitting others. There was always gonna be people who were... but you see a lot and more who didn't think they could do something actually, then they produced something and you could see on their faces the pride they had. That was one of the main things I enjoyed and being around, but yeah for those days and hours in the morning and afternoon, even though I was still in prison I did feel like I was at work.

S: yeah, I'd say that was definitely what we wanted to create. But you know essentially you're still prisoners at the end of the day and I think that was the issue and especially I was like peter in that respect and when people didn't respect that or just kind of took that opportunity for granted I think that's what caused the problems. Cause all we used to do is try and put nice things on for people, we weren't trying to punish them.

B: but I never felt like I was ever being punished in that room, I took a lot out of that, which again was a good thing. It kept my mind focused, there was always something going on in my head as well. At times it was out of the view of others and being in the art department just made everyday a day where I could get through even though I don't think I... when whatever I would get through the day but it just lifted, it gave you that focus on..right I'm doing this, and then everything I seemed worried about and that's where art almost became an addiction and almost an obsession. When I was living up with my mum and dad's [upon release] and watching telly night and I couldn't sit there and I'd just have to be doing something and that's why I got back into knitting because I'd just watch telly. But in the daytime at my mum and dad's for months I'd just shut myself in my room and just do beading and cards, anything that was art focused and crafts. My dada did mention to me one 'why did I shut myself in my room?' was it because it was something that I'd become used to? I didn't have the heart to say 'no it's because you're winding me up' [laughs]. I wanted to stay away from you [laughs]. Arts and crafts did definitely become my coping mechanism and still is to a point but now I've got the girls in my life and the things that I still do.

S: but even like earlier was a really nice moment when they all [the 3 children] sat round and were just looking over old photos and work, sharing your, it's a connection cause they're all highly arty. In that sense its nice cause they really encourage it.

B: and there was also, arts and crafts was a way of keeping in touch with them cause the two younger ones I was only allowed letter box contact so it was nice every now and again to make them something and send it out to them so it wasn't just a letter, got a boring letter off me.

S: and what, did you start sending jewellery and things like that?

B: yeah.

S: and what was their..were they shocked that you were making stuff like that?

B: yeah, I think X's worn her jewellery, I didn't ever make jewellery for X, she hates it, she's got this real aversion to jewellery but I used to make her little key fobs and I made her the husky picture, I made that cause she loves huskies. Or even to be able to, instead of just writing a letter or prison headed note paper I used to design my own note paper and get it printed [laughs] off in the library and then could it all in and then write on that or I'd get card and put a design on the front. I remember when their dad died I made a card with swallows on the front to let them know I was thinking of them, that just made it, I thought, nicer for them rather than just getting a blank piece of paper with a prison number on it. Made it more personal for them and they've all kept everything I sent to them.

S: yeah, for that reason isn't it? Cause they...

B: yeah. That's what I started knitting things, once I got to house block 4 and got involved in the Women's Institute as well, cause once they realized I like arts and stuff I started making stuff like card and stuff.

S: she's a keeper [laughs].

B: yeah [laughs]. Um, and that again, being in the art room kept me focused during the day and the Women's Institute kept me focused during the evenings, kept me sane. Basically what it did was kept me sane, yeah.

S: so er, yeah, let's talk a bit about Koestler.

B: with Koestler at first I didn't think I'd do it, it was the stigma of being a prisoner and didn't want, didn't want any of that and then talking to some of the ladies that came from Koestler and just them praising things you'd done and then I just thought it's pretty much anonymous.

S: yeah.

B: what have I got to lose you know? So yeah, I gave it a go and I was pleasantly surprised, to do it the two years I was on probation, yeah three years at Koestler and I know the second year I did get exhibited in Cardiff. But I didn't go, although they offered to pay for my transport and everything because I didn't the girls with me you know...

S: oh wow, so what, what, what did they put up do you know?

B: do you remember the painting I did of a tiger? Well it was more of a canvas, that was one of them., and...

S: wow, I wonder if I can get that. It might be on the website [Koestler website] actually, when was that? Last year?

B: er, not the one that's just gone [awards] but the year before.

S: 2015?

B: 2014, yeah...yeah. But yeah now they definitely have a couple of things, might even have been the playing card thing as well, might have been, but I definitely had something in, stuff exhibited there. And it is just, not even about the money, it's nice to read the feedback, just constructive.

S: just to know that someone's seen your work as well really.

B: the one that really made me go yay! Oh god I can't think of his name now.

S: Grayson Perry?

B: yeah, he's looked at some of my work and written some feedback about it and I was like yay! Cause I really like him, I admire him as a person and as an artist.

S: he's very invested in it though.

B: watching all these documentaries, he's amazing.

S: he's, he's, he judges every year. And Sarah Lucas did it one year. That was 2014 I think or 2013. Maybe before then.

B: or 13.

B: so yeah I always liked him.

S: it's a big thing. I always say to people, most people would love to have their work judged by these people and have their work in the Royal Festival Hall.

B: yeah, yeah.

S: so it is a massive thing really cause a lot of struggling artists who haven't been to prison who have been to prison.

B: won't get that chance yeah.

S: won't get that chance. I know recently at Lewes prison down near Brighton, there's 7 artists working, in a prison very unheard, massive art department for a prison, um, and Anthony Gormley went to visit them and speak to the men.

B: so yeah, I think prisons, the justice system, art has a huge role to play, more so than any other kind of education, definitely.

S: so you know..

B: it's therapeutic, rather than sitting in maths or English is torture. And I hated, in those education rooms, I hated the environment. You know because it was always kicking off, you know we did have our moments but on the whole a lot calmer and as my role as a classroom assistant I think I only ever had two people have a go at me and that diffused quite quickly. And then you know and then sometime you find sometimes you find yourself stepping in where I never had before and try and diffuse the situation.

S: do you think that was part of your role?

B: there was Echo [another prisoner].

S: oh that time with X?

B: yeah, yeah.

S: I remember, which I should never probably have done, I remember pulling her by the arm away, away into the workshop next door, yeah. Do you think that was about your role here, seeing yourself as a member of staff there?

B: yeah but I was always very aware that even though that was my job, I was still one of them and I would always be viewed as one of them or they would call me..

S: officer no keys?

B: officer no keys.

B: although they never called me that, although I was very aware I had to balance that this was my job but I had to realize that at night I was still locked up as they were. X was one girl I will always remember, I always wonder, how is she doing? Don't know why. I just felt sorry for her, I think, when she had her kid taken, adopted out I, my heart just broke for her and we had lots of little pep talks about getting on the straight and narrow and getting a job, getting somewhere to live and maybe in 18 years time and you'll get a phone call and it'll be your child saying.. and I wrote her, did her a card and she was really chuffed and everything so...

S: yeah, there are a few that were like that and I think, I wonder...

B: she wasn't much older than X [her eldest daughter] and when she left I thought, you know, you don't know what can happen. Then there was X [another prisoner].

S: I can, I can see her face now, she had a little round face.

B: yeah, boy's haircut, she had a huge crush on X, one of the officers, really tall guy. And she liked Muse [band].

S: [laughs] yeah. I really remember the name and then I was thinking of all, all other people, faces and that. Yeah we had a few [prisoners] that were really, really a pain in the arse that we really tried to work with and they would do something and really blow it. X [another prisoner] was like that, she was a very tall lady that we took on as a worke, she used to sit and paint a lot. She was a nightmare on the wings, but she calmed down and she used to sit and paint. She had red hair?

B: no?

S: she made the crack den [work of art]?

B: I think that was just before me.

S: and that, she made that as a joke and that went into Koestler and won a platinum award and people's choice award and all sorts. And from that moment, she didn't know I'd entered that, I entered it for her and then there was a change in her and I would, at one point I would have never have had her working in that room permanently. Who'd have known she was actually really good at painting and drawing, she used to make those 3D letters for people., themed, for people's kids and stuff like that. I remember going on holiday and she'd thrown a chair at Peter whilst I was away and it'd all gone wrong.

B: I remember those boxes?

S: yeah.

B: just the things that people could make a box into was amazing, I mean I've got some in the other room that I've made into a dressing room or mad hatter's tea party.

S: wow.

B: I wouldn't have even thought it was something you could do, it just needs some imagination, it's just fiddly. But also once you'd starting setting up the concept arts [social enterprise project] that was really good as well because..

S: gave you [prisoners] a bit of structure..

B: yeah.

S: yeah, I went out [on ROTL] with two ladies, who did I go out with? X and?

B: and X?

S: yeah.

S: so..what happened about the mentoring? [with Koestler trust].

B: hmmm..

B: um, I eventually paired up with a mentor up here, they did say was it a concern because she was a lot younger than me. She was fairly fresh out of uni sort of thing but we met up in X and had coffee and she was lovely, lovely girl, again a bit older than Kaya, which did feel a bit odd but she was very passionate about art, she'd done a lot of paintings and yeah we got on really well. I think we met up twice and I showed her some of my work and then we met up to do um a life drawing class [laugh] and I was like oh god, which again I would have never have done, but it was ok, managed to do it. Just glad it was a female [laughs]. And then I never heard anything, we were meant to meet up monthly, I never heard, I emailed her and didn't hear anything back and just let it go and then eventually contacted Koestler and said, oh no they contacted me about something and said 'how's it going?' and I said I've only met her 3 times and I haven't heard anything, then they emailed back and said they were very sorry, it doesn't happen but very often, but sometimes...I think her mum had health issues so again I don't know what happened.

S: she just couldn't commit to it, then she should have just said.

B: yeah, the one thing I just thought it would have been nice if I had been told either by her or Koestler and by then it was too far on to, and eventually it just hadn't happened.

S: cause they done a big evaluation last year about great it had been [mentoring programme].

B: cause I filled in a quite a few forms and I said that the mentoring I did have was good, but it stopped.

S: I'd quite like to do that [mentoring] but I don't think I could fit it in. I would. In Kent and Sussex or even the London area, there's loads of prisons. But I don't know what the commitment would be. But I would do it; I'd be really interested in doing it.

B: at first I thought 'what are we going to do?' there's not a huge amount to do up here. She [the mentor] would have probably come to Cardiff when I had the exhibition. We were gonna go to galleries, down in Cardiff or whatever. She had other things, I don't know, or whatever. You know, I don't know there's much she could have helped me with other than being someone there to sort of maybe give me fresh ideas or just be there.

S: or your, I mean you're quite self-motivated in making things yourself. Or be to keep it going cause I think the mentoring is there to be the things that you engage in in prison don't fall by the wayside when you go on, I think that's, I think there's really good intentions for it but, because it is heard to go out and suddenly you had all this support, I think that, I'm being really biased but I think prison art teachers are a special breed of people..

B: oh definitely.

S: their not like maths teachers, we eat, sleep breathe art, you're always, your eyes are open, you're always things, I mean if you teach other subjects, I'm generalizing, but I don't think it's the same.

B: the only teacher who ever taught me anything, was she didn't really teach me anything but I produced a portfolio of work with her, as person, was X, Irish...

S: yeah, yeah.

B: and she always whenever she saw you would always say hello.

S: yeah, yeah, she really cared.

B: yeah, whereas the maths teacher...

S: X?

B: yeah, yeah.

S: he was waiting to retire though.

B: oh was he? His attention...

S: he was the health and safety officer.

B: he had no control of his class.

S: he wasn't invested in it as much though was he?

B: that's the...in the art department..

S: well we were always doing things at home, spending out of our own money, just all of the time, coming up with new things we could do, coming up with new ideas, you know a lot of that work hadn't happened in work, it had taken a lot, that's the difference, and you really really get so much pleasure when someone does something. It's like 'oh my god'. You wanna just celebrate it and yeah, yeah, yeah.

B: yeah, I just can't say enough about being on a course [in art], [laughs], it was my saviour. Everything yeah, juts kept me focused, kept me sane, kept me calm.

S: there was a couple of like women yeah, like, er, were there to do projects and things, had said comments like, I think when we were making these like theatres, these models, they'd get so engrossed in it, it would get to like half 11 and you'd say pack up and they'd be like no! and they were like 'oh I couldn't sleep last night, I was just thinking about coming back and finishing my work today'. It was about just coming back and finishing it, that is so powerful, that's such a powerful thing you can't, no way of measuring that way of, that that that, just stopping someone, I mean occupying their mind maybe plotting something. Or wallowing or whatever it is. I don't think when we're evaluating things or we're capturing successes, which is all I do in my new job, I measure data and how me performance and it's all to do with qualifications and progress and what have you. I think that is success, those people who were making that progress were making progress..

B: definitely.

S: I mean some of them were a complete nightmare to work with but you got them onto one thing and you would see the positive change in them. To be involved in that one thing, yeah, just yeah. But the important think about this research if I have to hear it from other people, it's no good me saying it..

S: so what was the work, the reaction that you got from people about the work you produced in prison? do you think maybe you got friends, what sort of response did you get?

B: my family were proud, I was sort of, my mum and dad would want me to do it. So I was doing a lot more and I remember the girls, if they'd been telling people what I've done for them [artwork for competitions]. Then I started winning awards, to get silvers, and they [family] were really proud of that. My family would say that 'she's had work submitted and exhibited'. Feedback from you know proper artists, so they were all good, friends, probably more friends in prison who knew more. I did keep in touch with some people before prison.

S: and lastly, I've got one more question then I want to ask you some questions about your artwork.

B: oh.

S: they're not that bad are they?

B: no, I'm just thinking about which artwork I'm gonna choose [laugh].

S: so, I, obviously I know...about... tell me about your work since leaving prison.

B: so obviously in prison I had that stitch in time [industrial sewing workshop in prison] woman ask me to do jewellery for this thing..

S: yeah, yeah.

B: that kind of fell apart because she changed her mind, and her goals, and that..

S: and her expectations?

B: yeah, of what I actually could do..

S: yeah, yeah.

B: what she wanted, kind of cause I'd put a lot of work into that in my cell, so then I, it made me kind of more focused to carry on and make jewellery cause I really enjoyed it. And that could possibly be a way of setting up my own business and making, hope to do, certainly for me when you come out of prison and you feel like you've got this huge stigma attached to you, are you gonna get a job? I don't wanna have to keep talking about to complete strangers why I was in prison and going through everything. So to me, I thought that trying to set up my own business was definitely a way forward. Fit it with my life and I'm still trying to do that so I focused as soon as I got a little bit of money together the first thing I did was went and bought a load of jewellery, found a decent ish website for beads, findings, got myself a big loom. And I, sit there and just churn out jewellery all day long and just draw pictures, try to, and the I got back into big pictures for jewellery designs, a few pictures. I did, my mum's hair dresser, he's got some dogs and I he asked me if I'd do a portrait of the dogs, then he asked if I could do another one and I got paid. Then I just did pictures for some other people, then I set up my facebook page which I haven't done anything on since new year I think, er, yeah, but yeah it's something I want to do, I see art being in my life. I want to make it a career, or a part time career if I can. It's just, these are probably all excuses: time, money, knowledge, I think sometimes with art and craft, perhaps it's just finding a couple of people who like your stuff and they help promote you.

S: it's definitely about finding your niche, but...

B: yeah.

S: yeah, but definitely think the Internet is the way to go for you, hook onto the right thing or get traffic to your site.

B: yeah, cause I've bought stuff that's...

S: people would buy all your...

B: yeah.

S: just don't know where they are, do you?

B: yeah, cause I've bought stuff off Etsy and that's just someone sat in their house with a few beads, making, and then of course I feel quite paranoid about doing everything the right and legal way, cause the last thing I need is...

S: taxman?

B:...to go back in.

B: you just over worry about things, so I've been on lots of courses. I've been on a self employment course which I sourced myself which was set up by the local Government, that was err 6 week course. Dealing with things like book keeping, stock taking, everything you needed to know. Then I've been on other courses locally that were all free to help you do your business plan, but then I was told I don't need a business plan because it was art and crafts and therefore it kind of all speaks for itself.

S: ok, I'm wondering if you build something big you know...

B: there was another one about promoting yourself and photographing products [laughs], I just took my phone, cause I take pretty much all my photos on my phone and he [course leader] was actually quite impressed, he actually said there's not an awful lot he would have done differently. Except he said he may have photographed some bracelets that had a seaside theme and the model in it with a bucket and spade and keep it in context but he liked sort of the retro theme I had going on.

S: yeah your whole site could actually be like that yeah.

B: yeah, yeah, yeah.

S: that investment in it.

B: cause actually my cards [greetings cards], I drew a load up on paper, took them to, to, to, staples, had a load printed off onto card, then I hand cut them all out, stuck them onto you know blank card and I know that if I took them to a proper printers then it would all already come up as a proper thing with my little print on the back.

S: so had you costed that all out? That's a good idea. Especially at Christmas you could do like big packs, retro Christmas cards. You could make the box even, or buy a cheap box or whatever and do your design on it. And sell in bulk cause that's where you wanna go with it, if it takes off like you want it to you're not gonna have time to sit making a hundred things.

B: I had started making old cards, people had given me old cards, but some to steal the design from and stick on old card but market things up cycled but I don't know how it works with cards. See my brother thinks that if it's somebody's photograph you're not legally allowed to..but the woman at the craft shop said that as long as it's a card that someone had used then you can up cycle it but I found it hard to find a definitive answer and again it's not something I'd want to sort of, I make them more for friends. I wouldn't want to make them for the craft shop and then have trading standards come at me and go errrr. But yeah I definitely, arts and crafts will always be part of my life, I've got to make two jumpers for my friend in exchange for the tortoises, that was my barter.

S: you can't keep swapping stuff though, you've gotta make some money [laughs].

B: [laughs] um, this woman she just shared a thing on facebook and these were belts, very like native American, and she private messaged me, could you make them to fit though belt loops, and I thought making a belt is like making a long bracelet, isn't it?

S: yeah.

B: yeah so yeah, don't know how you'd fit the buckle on, but you could, especially if you backed in on to felt.

S: someone did make a belt, did you ever see it?

B: they made chokers.

S: it was really long and it had different scenes on it and it was sent to Koestler. Someone did make it continuously on a loom; it was only about that big.

B: yeah.

S: yeah.

B: and I messaged her back and she said 'don't private message me, message me back on the site, you might get....

S: yeah, yeah.

B: I know there's Etsy, the British version of Etsy is Folksy, it doesn't have the people that visit that site as much as Etsy, obviously there's Ebay which I could..

S: you could have your own shop.

B: yeah, although someone said start selling your stuff on Ebay, if you start selling loads Ebay will realize and charge you as a shop or something. So for now...cause I never really sold enough in the shop to sell the shelf fee.

S: it's not really like, you're not gonna get the same trade are you?

B: no, it's older ladies and they won't like a sort of Halloween made, it's just like.. [laughs].

S: no.

B: unless you get the odd quirky person pop in, sold quite a few of my little hats.

S: you need more 'camdeny' stuff or Brick lane.

B: yeah.

B: there's um, some of the courses I did, I think it's called community first or something, it's quite nice I went along for the first time on my own and it's quite often the same people and they all sort of know each other doing jewellery making and stuff and some of them want to be. Quite often go along cause there's lunch provided, it's quite nice, it's for networking. Met a couple of people and they might be interested in selling some of my jewellery, there's another shop in Colwyn Bay which sells pagan jewellery, sells incense and stuff and he's interested in if I do pagan card design and the paganism jewellery and he doesn't ask he just sells your

stuff and takes a commission, he doesn't charge for shelf rental. Er, um yeah this community first thing they've got 2 pop ups in the high street, which is quite unusual cause it's mostly just drug addicts and I know I got offered, I got top of the list to do it but it's always come at a time when I've been busy, something to do with social services. I said just keep me top of the list and just phone me, cause I think 12-16 weeks that's a test of trading thing, you don't pay rental and obviously everything you make you keep. There's one woman her business she up cycles and she did quite why, I wish I could remember her name. Another guy he does photography, another woman did spinning and weaving and knitting, she's got her own shop. They phoned me some weeks back and in one of their other shops they would give me one of their class cabinets for free. They just wanted to have my contact details in a professional thing, a card, that's the only thing I haven't got at the moment. They don't sell anything out of the cabinet; it's just for contact.

S: right, but you could make something on the computer and put in onto foam board. Yeah, as a plaque, with your contact details or whatever, I'm sure they [the children] could do that for you. Yeah.

B: yeah, yeah, yeah, I know I do make excuses for not doing things.

S: you gonna have to keep pushing it, pushing it and pushing it. You've got to; it'll be worth it.

B: yeah, I can't be my mum's carer forever and she's not going to be here forever. I could never be my dad's carer.

S: if you have a site that takes off in it's own right you should be able to get people to send their work to be sold on your site. Which is where you want to go and make money out of it.

B: the Blue Banana was a shop I thought about selling in, we've also got an art gallery in X which has a shop. I'd like to sell in there. But yeah Internet is the way to go.

S: rightyo, piece of artwork.

B: [laughs], has it gotta be the most powerful?

S: doesn't need to be, cause I'll look at all these other pieces in the context of where they are. Cause I want to end up with 8 pieces from all the women, well 1 piece each just looking at something from a point in time. Cause I had one from a lady who painted a fire because her farm was burned down.

B: in that case it will probably be the one I did for the X Gallery. So er. It was something that I wasn't even gonna do cause I was late into the project. I'd been working with the inmates and in my role as classroom assistant I was too busy helping everybody else to even think about doing anything and I was like, but then talking to the ladies who were doing the project and talking to the teacher I thought I'd love to do one [a picture/painting] tomorrow if there's time. So X gave me some paper and stuff to do in my cell, after we were locked up just had a bit of a brainstorm.

S: so does it have a title that piece? I think it does, I've taken a picture.

B: it's called...present, hope for the future.

S: so why have you chosen that piece?

B: it must have been quite early in my sentence so I was still very scared, confused, quite panicky. Just completely gutted, worried about the girls, and I still hadn't sort of got used to the prison regime and that unnerved me quite a lot.

So it was kind of..normally I don't do kind of spontaneous artwork, I do, I would never do..self portrait..

S: functional I would say.

B: animals..you know, stuff like that, I'd never do portraits, and I just had these kind of words just running. Even though I felt almost despairic, I was more of hope; I just knew that I wasn't going to give up till I got my kids back. So, I was trying to think and I just came up with these words about how I wanted to feel, how I knew I would feel in the future, just came to me. I wanted to do it like a tattoo, like old school tattoo. An image with a retro feel, kind of all just came together in my mind as a portrait how and felt there and then and then so really sad, depressed and dammed which is why I did the tears on it. My eyes were shut but I wanted to incorporate the fact that my goal for the future was my family which is why I did the 3 roses cause they represent each of the girls. And then I just thought if I did a swirl around starting with how I actually feel now and how it all just sort of radiated, not negative things but emotional, low emotional things and then it all starting radiating out into positive things, my goals for the future.

S: did you do it on brown paper?

B: no I did it on white paper and stuck it on black card.

S: I thought it was on brown paper, we had a lot of that paper. Maybe I'm thinking of something else.

S: so what sort of response did you get? Obviously it made it into, into there [exhibition catalogue].

B: I don't know really cause I'm not really sure if the girls came in the next day, they must have come to collect the work.

S: I didn't even see that you did that piece until I saw it printed in there [the catalogue].

B: ok, maybe you were off that day. I remember Peter saw it and maybe the girls came in the next day and took it, I remember everybody else having an hour to finish it, I'd just done it in my room the night before. They said oh they really liked it, don't know if they'd used the word powerful, or emotional, I just said ok then I'll enter it and that was it really.

S: what do your girls think of it? Do they know what it symbolizes and why you made it?

B: they'd be like and say 'oh mum', it's all sappy and emotional and everything, they don't like doing all that emotional stuff. But I also know that they're proud of it and they know it's been in an exhibition and the brochure and I've got that brochure to show. And that I, I think that they're proud of the fact that it's about them even though it's a portrait of me, it's about them really and I think yeah, I know they like it. We kind of have this thing where we kind of gloss over things cause like I said they don't like being over emotional and sappy. Maybe because they don't want to let themselves be because if they let it go then they won't be able to stop. I don't know. But yeah..

S: but for your artwork you're able to do it though.

B: yeah, yeah.

S: in a way that doesn't really need to be said.

B: yeah, yeah, the first word on there is sorrow and the last word is hope. So, yeah..

S: so looking at it now, sort of like, is it? Thinking back to when you actually made that and that emotion, what are you? What do you think of it like when you look at it now?

B: I look back and it has the potential to make me emotional, remembering those really dark, dark days. But in a way it doesn't. It makes me feel, feel stronger, you know I don't think it's a brilliant piece of work by any, any means [laughs], personally. Um, but I'm glad I did it and I'm proud of it and in a way it was probably one of the first things I did in prison art wise that was really therapeutic. It kind of. Yeah, like you said it's letting everything out without having to say it.

S: yeah which is what um, art therapy's about isn't it?

B: yeah.

S: because I went to a conference in April. Spoke at a conference about, at Goldsmiths and it was art therapists.

B: right.

S: but as an art teacher or an arts researcher, totally different dynamic because the work that we make as teachers or we want our students is about very much what they're proud of or what they can keep. Say it's a commission or a competition it's all about the aesthetics and trying your best and trying new things, whereas art therapy is purely just getting it out there, so that is totally different to when you've made something and giving it to one of the girls and you've put a lot of effort into it and you're pleased with it. Then you give it to them, they frame it or put it on the wall, whereas that [points to artwork] you saying that 'it's not my favourite piece of work', 'it's not the best piece of work', you did it because you just wanted to get it out. So the therapist was saying that it's really easy to get their...cause there was a therapist there working in Holloway [women's prison].

B: right.

S: she said it was really easy to get the work to, 'oh yeah you can have that, you can have that'. It was quite difficult for me [as an art teacher] to get hold of work or get them to put it in [competitions] because they wouldn't give it to me. So it was quite a different dynamic, it was really hard; I used to plead with people 'please let me put this into Koestler, I promise it will get back to you'. And you know I remember that Kaniel who I just telling you about and she had made a jewellery box and it was amazing inside and she didn't want to give it to the Watts Gallery and it was very, like she spent so much time on it. I was like 'please let it be shown', it was such a good cause and she said 'alright, only for you, cause you asked me to'. And she made that very clear to the woman, the artist who came because it was like 'you're not taking this away from me, I don't have much in here', it was like 'I'll do it for you Sophie', so it's really, really interesting for me that you've said that about you know, that you said it's not your favourite piece and work and you're not gonna have that up. Whereas I think that it's something you could definitely have up and I think it's, I really like that.

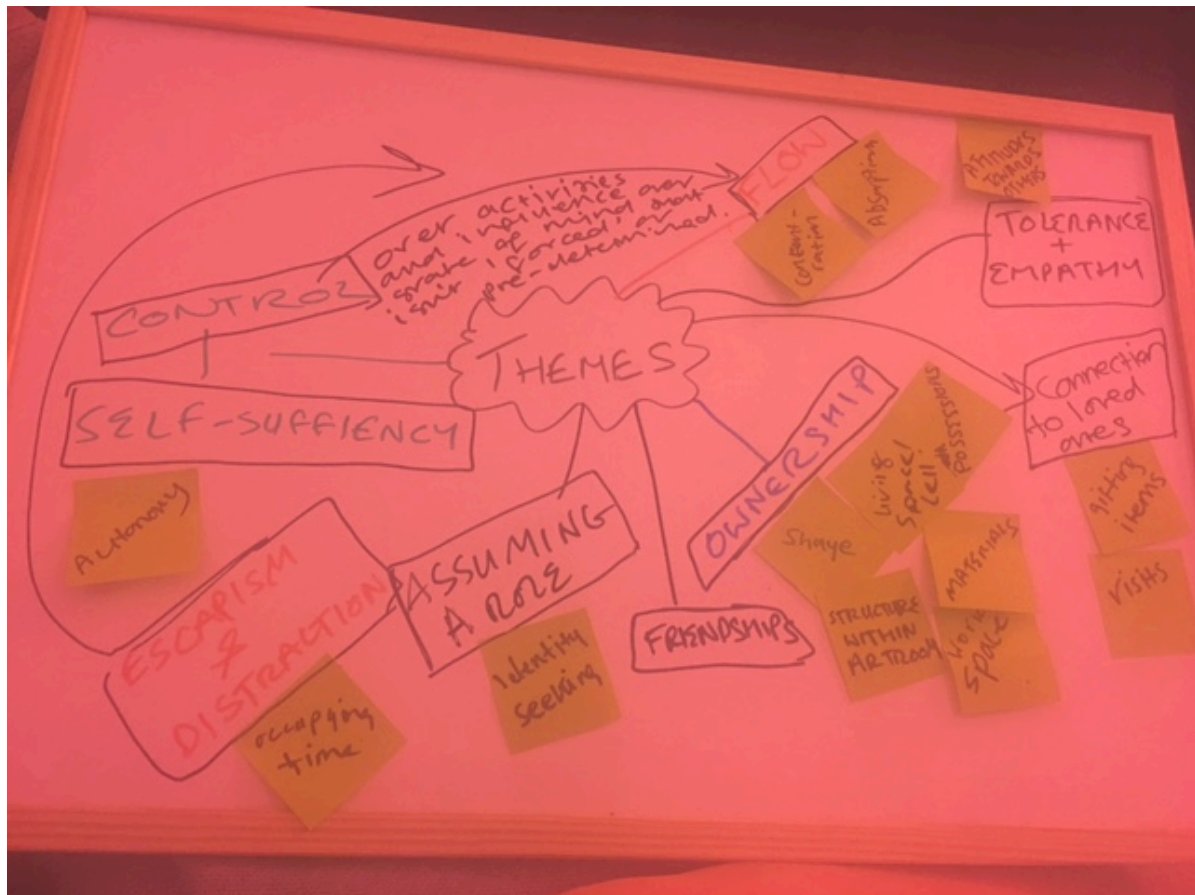
B: I do look at it from time to time and it does make me think 'that's then', it was kind of a whole world away and you know I'm still not where I want to be but I'm getting there. And you know that's all written down there.

S: it might be a positive thing, about evaluating where you are, saying you're not where you want to be but at least you're not there.

B: exactly.

S: yeah, it is interesting. Cause I don't, have a great understanding of the therapeutic side to it and getting into, I've read a lot about the 'state of flow', we can all get into that and if you start something, like writing. I'll work through the night and then I won't want to stop. Keep thinking, 'I'll do ten minutes more'. I'll just do ten minutes more, it's the same with the drawing, I'll do a drawing and I'll [laughs] do that charcoal picture....

Appendix 9: Thematic trend analysis/interpreting data



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